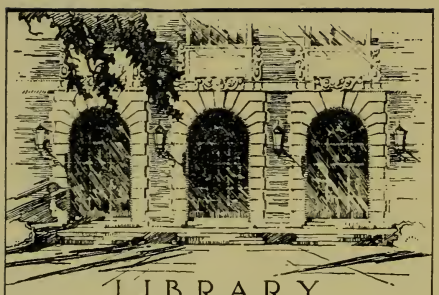

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WILD ROSE.

A Romance.

BY

JOHN HILL.

'Sah ein Knab' ein Röslein stehn,
Röslein auf der Heiden,
War so jung und morgenschön,
Lief er schnell es nahzusehen,
Sah's mit vielen Freuden
Röslein, Röslein, Röslein roth
Röslein auf der Heiden.'
J. W. v. GOETHE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.
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WILD ROSE.

CHAPTER I.

'Where's Bohemia? Speak,
Here in your city.'

Winter's Tale.

Jack went to Paris, and pitched his metaphoric tent in the region sacred to the memory of Musset, Mürger, Mimi Pinson, and lastly, Rosa. He plunged forthwith, under the guidance of Dr. Taylor, into the effervescing life which lay inviting him among the artists and students. He went sketching along the Seine, into the country, with cheerful boat-loads of

friends; he played billiards, he frequented the Chalet and the brasseries, and the balls, and the theatres, and sat out in the open-air café-chantants smoking cigarettes, and drinking *mazagran,* and talking to Taylor till they both discovered that their talents lay chiefly in the direction of pleasantly wasting time.

After having made solemn and fervent resolutions to work hard, during the whole of some fine autumn afternoon, they would be tempted off by the first train that started in the direction of some resort, where they would find friends and amusement.

Jack did some painting, certainly, but very little medicine. He and Taylor (with whom he struck up a great alliance) would sit on wooden stools, smoking and chatting, in the physiological laboratory, and when they were theoretically pursuing some startling discovery, they were usually

in reality planning a diversion for the evening, and the dogs and guinea-pigs were spared their martyrdom to research.

'I really like this old laboratory,' said Jack, at the end of six months. 'I have spent so many jovial idle hours in it.'

'Say, Miller, have you done anything in the last month besides drying an ounce of mercuric nitrate?'

'You have to be very careful over these things. It takes a long time to thoroughly dry a salt.'

'Especially if you incidentally leave the flame burning under it all night, and forget everything while you are looking on at "Madame Angot," you can't expect it to be exactly as you want it in the morning.'

Jack laughed, and toyed with a piece of glass tubing.

'There's that Jew having his third explosion!' remarked Taylor.

'Oh, Eisenfeld! Yes. He carried a piece of glass tubing nearly two thirds across the room without dropping it, just before you came in.'

They were speaking of a Polish Jew, one of the butts of the laboratory, who was celebrated for his elaborate combinations of apparatus, and the promptitude they displayed at 'busting up,' as Taylor termed the sudden and violent chemical process by which they usually met their end. The Pole seemed to anticipate these catastrophes, through long habit. He knew Fate was against his experiments, and sat with a pale face and his coat collar turned up while his distillery, or whatever it might be, frizzled ominously.

There were many characters in that laboratory. Among them, not the least important was the Alsatian garçon, Berg-

mann, a quiet, middle-aged little man, with a lurking joke in his eye, and an affable manner, and a readiness to do you any service, from packing your trunks, or recommending you a lodging, to carrying a bouquet to your mistress. He inhabited a mysterious den in the cellarage, where he kept dogs, frogs, salamanders, newts, bread, eggs, beer, wine, tobacco, and all the necessary adjuncts of the pursuer of physiological research.

Then there were 'Messieurs les Docteurs,' who worked in the laboratory and its departments, and were ready, most of them, to join in any merriment or scheme of extempore and economical pleasure when working hours were over. They might be found all talking and laughing, and smoking and drinking, in a café, at all sorts of wild hours of the night—a collection of savants of all nations and languages, from Schultze, the long Prussian,

with an expression like a jackdaw, who sportively climbed a lamp-post in the street one night, while the rest of the learned institute threw the débris of fruit and lumps of sugar at him, to Dr. Wizetsky, from some Muscovite university, who celebrated his birthday, or some one else's, by a Bacchanalian entertainment of the whole Institute, consisting of claret, bière de Strasbourg, bière de Vienne, bière de Bass, Rhine wine, and 'vodka,' after which he carefully folded up his coat and waistcoat on the kerbstone, when the others had gone home, and folded his own person for slumber in the gutter, and, on awaking in the police-station, broke into a long, vehement, and utterly bewildering passionate appeal in Russian, which frightened the sergents-de-ville, more than it gave information.

Then there was Norney, the Dane, who persisted in wearing an ancient and cele-

brated but time-battered hat, which the remorseless iconoclasts of modern science did their best to annihilate. When Norney had had a whole bottle of wine, or eight glasses of Strasbourg beer, he relapsed into Danish, and his valuable eloquence became lost to the general public. He made some important discovery about carbonic acid production in the blood.

Besides these, there were other Russians, Roumanians, Frenchmen of course, Hungarians, Germans a few, Poles many—nearly all wild, jovial, hard-working fellows, who loved an *al fresco* polka as well as the achievement of crystallizing albumen. They haunted particular cafés where they were known, and made excursions together in the summer into the little country villages so conveniently near to Paris, and lived a life of honest hard and intellectual work, alternating with frank, mirthful, and unrestrained 'larking' of the most Bohemian

and unlimited description. They had passed their student days, these men, but had ended them so recently, that the spirit and appetite of the old free-and-easy life had not died out.

It was into this society that Jack fell, and found a ready welcome and a ready jest to meet him. There was, however, more intimacy between himself and Ivor Taylor than anyone else. Dr. Schultze, who was funny, called them 'Max and Moritz,' after Busch's celebrated story. Taylor was leaving his summer and high-tide of life slowly behind; Jack was entering on his. Taylor had all the experience of Paris life necessary to make him a competent, though not precisely virtuous, guide to the young beginner. But then, as may be supposed, unless preceding efforts at displaying Jack's character have been wholly ineffective, reverence for severe virtue in the abstract and moral

regularity in the concrete were not the most conspicuous features in his ethical personality. If they had been, he came to the ' wrong shop ' for promoting them.

Without going into details, it may be hinted that Jack had no hesitation in fulfilling his theory that life is worth making as enjoyable as possible, according to taste and circumstances, and his motto was, ' Fais ce que veux, advienne que pourra.' He was too refined and fastidious (as were his friends for the most part) at this stage of his existence to prostrate himself before Venus Volgivaga; but still, he was fully in the glittering meshes of the capital of civilization, and in his fifteen months or so of sojourn found himself in love with Paris as much as any of her real children, from Villon to Hugo. He loved the old streets and the new boulevards, the sunshine, the cafés, the theatres, the toilettes and high heels, art and the artists, and all

the glowing mist of mental pictures, defying the powers of the pen, which crowd into the brain at the sound of the word Paris.

One day, while boiling an egg over a Bunsen flame, with a view to subsequent consumption, Taylor observed:

'I've been in Californian bar-rooms, I've sauntered along the Prater in Vienna, I've hung over smelly canals and looked down picturesque water-streets in Amsterdam, I've laid myself out in the sun to air and dry in Italy, but I never have found any place to compare with Paris. There's no place you get the same feeling for. You may revel for a month or two in art capitals like Munich and Florence, you may wander with the ghosts of Rembrandt and Ostade and Mieris in the old towns of Holland and Flanders, but for a place to live in and stick to, give me my old Paris.'

"Il n'est bon bec que de Paris,"' quoted

Jack, who was leisurely consuming cigarettes, doubtless in the pursuit of scientific information as to the effect of nicotine on the tissues.

'There is a feeling one can't lucidly figure out that attaches one to these streets and all that goes on in them—the place so many splendid youths are spent or spoilt in. Paris can be cruel as well as kind. She is a sort of Faustina, whom you must admire, if you sometimes dread. Paris is the place for you and me, young man.'

'You would think so if you came from a small English provincial town. My goodness! what would some of one's estimable and respectable friends think of one's life here!'

'I never was in England. I knew an Englishman here once. He worked hard, and was a good fellow, but rather shy. He went to the English church on Sunday

mornings and strolled into Bullier in the evening.'

'England is a curious country. It has really beautiful scenery, and a proverbially variable climate, *vide* guide-book. The people are a very curious study indeed. They are very rich and very poor, the latter being in an unpleasant majority. We are slow to accept ideas from the outside, perhaps from a dislike to be dictated to or interfered with, perhaps from our fearfully practical nature. We shrink, as a rule, from mentally placing ourselves outside our own customs, and criticizing them from the objective, or even from the merely continental, point of view. In a bird's-eye view of the metropolis, the following things, I think, would strike one most: There are immense facilities for procuring spirits retail, and strong adulterated beer. These facilities are taken advantage of. There are immense facilities

for religious worship in every conceivable form. These are taken less advantage of. Many of our young men of the period are good-looking, strong, and brave. They think a clean body more important than a clear brain. They give a cold bath precedence to morality. They profess a respect for the so-called intuitional form of the latter, even if they (intuitionally, perhaps, too) break its rules, and few who lead an undeniably fast life will courageously and consistently admit that they approve of it. The pious and proper part of the population incline to execrate the open expression of heterodox theories more than the tacit practice of them. Our architecture and public monuments are mostly loathsome, except those of a certain antiquity, which are periodically knocked down to be replaced by modern and uninteresting structures with the object of pecuniary gain. Those of us who can

understand Heine, Musset, Gautier and Baudelaire, call them morbid—with a few honourable exceptions. Our best modern literature is the least popular. I never was an author myself, so I can say that without the risk of a personal feeling being imputed. We abuse the licentious French drama, and then steal it and give it at our own theatres, under new names, and find it pays, too.'

'Excessive patriotism don't seem to be your weakness, any way. Suppose you give us the bright side now.'

'We can paint in water-colours better than any other nation. We have a very high per-centage of good-looking women and girls. We understand comfort, and we speak and write within tolerably large limits what we please, only we don't please quite enough. We have invented the artistic costume, an entirely indigenous product, I believe, and we allow ourselves

to be painted and papered after the dictates of the Gospel according to St. Morris, and a very good prophet he is. We revere, or pretend to, when it is the fashion, old china and antique artistic furniture and fixings, and make the fortune of talented and industrious manufacturers of the same. We have produced some deuced good painters and poets within the century. We export into the wide world yearly a crop of enthusiastic young cultivated agnostics and pagans from our universities, thanks, principally, to the religious teaching of the latter, to leaven and worry the world—I'm a specimen—and we do a lot of good in various ways, in which we are, I suppose, much like other people.'

'There's one great thing you've forgotten, which makes us continentalists respect you above all things. If any fellow's d——d fool enough to sacrifice

himself for the public weal by trying to bust up his king or emperor, or head-policeman and executioner-royal, he finds himself safe across your silver streak. If a man like Hugo is exiled from the city and land that his heart best loves for chastising in winged words the Government that has been a curse and an affliction to his nation, he finds a safe home on British soil. You've produced Shakespeare, Cromwell and Milton, Locke and Hume, Carlyle, and other living fellows whose books I read and whose genius I respect; and, young man, your country has (against its will, maybe) produced U.S.—*us*. What do you think?'

'Nobody can deny that, old man, though I think you have for the most part produced yourselves.'

'Well, we have our home-grown products, for which we and our climate, constitution and habits are alone responsible.

They are—rich men, pretty women, comfortable railroad cars, tomato salad, tragi-comic Californian literature, drinks, our war, Boss Tweed, revolvers, and Me.'

'Quite so; last, but not least. Trot that last product out of here, with me, will you, and let's go round and have a drink, and consider—say our next experiment.'

This is a mere parenthetic illustration of how these two eminent scientists spent their working hours. A few minutes later they might be seen in the Café Américain, or the Brasserie des XXII. Cantons, taking 'Vermouth gommé' and tobacco, debating where they would dine so as to combine sufficient nourishment with strict economy, previous to occupying places in the Ambigu or Variétés in the latter part of the evening.

On his aunt, the Marquise, Jack made an occasional duty-call. The result generally was that she wrote to Mrs. Miller to say that he was getting on very well,

dear fellow, improving rapidly in his French, and was apparently working very hard; and to Mrs. Frankland, to say that she feared her nephew, Mr. Miller, was becoming a very gay young man, and learning French (of a kind) with suspicious rapidity, and was apparently doing very little work—which tends to show that the Marquise could be all things to all women when her delicate tact showed her that circumstances rendered it advisable. The latter description of letter was usually, of course, read aloud to Rosa, who drew her own conclusions from it. After the reception of an instalment of the Marquise's correspondence Rosa was generally much more affable to Alfred de Tortoleone than usual, when he dropped in (he was always dropping in now) to afternoon tea.

Then, besides his scientific, Jack had his artistic friends, the stream of whose life was sparkling and rapid, like a champagne

stream, and untrammelled by the embankments and locks usually imposed on a life-stream in the form of the prejudices and artificial restraints of modern society. Into this stream, too, Jack splashed gaily, or, as Taylor would say, 'waded in.'

By the time his fifteen months or so had come nearly to an end, Jack summed up, and found himself feeling many years older than he was at the beginning, that he had gained many experiences, all interesting, many pleasant, a knowledge of French, a beard, an increased taste and talent for painting, a few francs from picture dealers, and enlarged acquaintance with the habits and modes of thought (if any) of certain sections of the fairer sex, a capacity for making love or cigarettes with 'neatness and despatch,' as repairing shoemakers phrase it, and a good many tolerably good friends, and one very good one, Dr. Ivor Taylor.

At last the time came for him to look at those bright old streets and haunts for the last time, feeling that a good time had gone by of a kind that does not return—if any good times ever return, and foreseeing the pathetic regard he would feel years hence for these identical streets and pavements, when the inevitable and irrevocable time of roses and raptures had departed, with the youth that alone could enjoy them, into the treasury of half-sad, half-glad remembrances existing in all our minds, which is wakened into life-like distinctness by the words, 'Auld lang syne.'

Jack drank his last 'bock,' danced his last dance, sold his test-tubes to Bergmann, the laboratory attendant; took pathetic farewells of Chitine, Lolotte, Celestine, Marion, Ninette et compagnie; shook hands with Drs. Schultze, Wizetzky, Norney, Blanchard, Moldowier, Rosso, O'Donoghue, etc., and seated himself in a

second-class carriage at the Embarcadère du Nord.

'Say, Miller, write sometimes,' said Dr. Taylor.

'Of course; come to England some day, and I'll show you round.'

And the train started. This is how an Englishman says 'Good-bye' to his best friend.

CHAPTER II.

'I tell thee, churlish priest—
A ministering angel shall my daughter be
When thou liest howling.'

Hamlet (*slightly altered*).

THINGS went on in the meantime much in the normal fashion in Winterdale. After the fancy ball came the Bishop's garden-party. These two always were expected, in regular sequence, like August and September, and usually came with quite as much regularity. The Bishop himself sauntered about at this gathering, placidly, stately, calmly, courteous to the leading gentry; charmingly bland to the leading ladies. He provided lawn tennis nets for

the young people, chairs for the elders, and ices, fruit, sponge-cakes, and claret cup for all.

Being the greatest grandee (the biggest bug, as Mrs. Frankland innocently remarked) that Winterdale possessed, next to the Lord-Lieutenant of the county, he was revered and courted by one and all. General Radford 'my lord'ed him copiously, and after privately extracting from him the admission that it was a fine day, publicly circulated the information, that the Bishop, 'when you really know him,' was a most eloquent man in conversation, with a manysided and farseeing mind. (The Bishop's share in the conversation consisted of 'How do you do?' and 'Yes.')

After each had made the Right Reverend J. J. Greene give similar examples of his eloquent conversation and manysided mind, the old men's chorus

settled down together under trees, and formed an imaginary club, and behaved accordingly. The scraps of conversation coming from these reverend seniors were of this nature:

'And he'll come in for a tidy bit of money, I can tell you.'

'Uncle was a money-lender, or Jew of some kind. Know the shop in Houndsditch.'

'They say it was a doocid Scotch marriage, if any——'

'Marriage! Bless your heart, why, I can tell you——'

'Geoghegan of the 88th always used to say to me—Raglan and he and self were sitting over a bottle of sherry before Sebastopol — know Raglan? Well, he said——'

'And it all reverts to her when he dies, forty thousand or thereabouts.'

'These d—d London fellows think they

can manage the army ! Begad, I'd like to put 'em in action for half an hour. Who's likely to know best about military matters, old soldiers like you and me, or a parcel of fellows with their heads full of Algebra and Geology and Political Economy and Latin, and doose knows how many more useless fads ?'

And then these interesting veterans would adjourn to the refreshment tent and drink glasses of sherry. They punctuated their existence with glasses of sherry and biscuits.

Meanwhile, young lieutenants and muscular curates would ply the elastic racket, and rush perspiringly after the maddening tennis-ball, that alway selects the most prickly vegetation to get lost in, and wish that the *convenances* allowed them to take their coats off.

The form of coat which curates, in their infinite and farseeing wisdom have thought

fit to adopt, is perhaps the most hampering garment for tennis-playing that could be devised. Since all curates in the country spend their unprofessional time in playing, or trying to play tennis, this fact might have struck them. But perhaps the coat is a relic of the dear old croquet dress, when movement was not considered an essential part of exercise.

The curates wore moustaches, or the nearest thing to moustaches which nature permitted. This annoyed and amused the lieutenants, their social rivals, who also failed to see what right 'these d—d curate-fellows had to smoke pipes, just like any other fellows, you know.' Then, with characteristic humour and good taste, one remarked: 'Let's ask 'em to our mess, and make 'em jolly drunk. Some of our songs would fetch 'em. What do you think?'

Dr. Miller happily met a brother savant,

and they conversed 'apart,' as the plays say, under a tree, on animal parasites, or something equally engrossing and important.

Hel was feeling rather sombre and unsatisfied about something or other, and paid little attention to the chatter of the Rev. Aloysius Jones, Mr. Exeter's new curate, red-hot from a theological college. Hel's mind was full of other things than districts, and decorations, and personal devils, and feasts of St. Michael, and eternal punishment, and the other topics which teemed on the tongue of this pleasant youth. She felt that they had occupied an otherwise indifferent mind, for want of something better, a while ago; but just now she could not help admitting to herself regretfully, perhaps, that they sounded a little tiresome. She was rather absent, and very nearly asked Mr. Jones if he read Heine.

The curate, though in the habit of dressing like one, was not exactly a fool, and could easily see that some one had been sapping the foundations of Hel's faith, and obedience, and recognition of his relationship of spiritual paternity to herself. (He was about five-and-twenty, with a pallid face, and sandy fluff on his head.) He felt it his duty to speak to her very seriously—so seriously, that he made her extremely uncomfortable, and caused her to hold a certain consultation with her father, of which more anon.

Rosa was there in an autumn dress of dull red, with Alfred de Tortoleone to wait on her. Rosa moved about under the great elms of the episcopal meadow, where the leaves had just begun to turn, and looked as if she fully belonged to the autumn scene. She, of course, would not take the trouble to play tennis; besides, her dress was too much tied back, and her heels were too

high. She merely looked on, and wondered how English girls could wear such hideous shoes, and make themselves so generally like gambolling cows.

One or two curates were introduced to her, but found her too thorny a rose, a great deal. A young lady of her independence of opinion, who took no interest in things beyond her comprehension, such as they dealt in, was novel to them. She fascinated and scared at the same moment. They thought she must be a survival from an old dead world, some one born in the days of Nero, or unearthed from Pompeii. She was so entirely of this earth, revelling in its beauties and delights alone. When a young lady bluntly and briefly informs you that she 'hates church' and changes the conversation to the coming sunset, what can you do, but smile sadly and talk about 'naytchaw?' So they gradually dropped off from the side of the pretty little heathen,

who walked languidly about with her eyes fixed on the

'Golden remote wild west where the sea without shore is,
Full of the sunset, and sad, if at all with the fulness of joy.'

The sunset came, sandy-coloured and unclouded, between the elms, died away, and left a dull ruddy glow along the horizon.

'Now take me to Mrs. Frankland,' said Rosa. 'It's time to go home.'

'Have you enjoyed yourself?' said De Tortoleone.

'Not a bit—well, the ice you got me was good. You might have got a bigger one. Come and see us soon, will you?'

'Certainly. Good evening.'

That evening, after dinner and coffee, Dr. Miller retired to his study, his den where the Things in the bottles were, to smoke a pipe or two, and consider a second instal-

ment of article for the 'Journal of Comparative Anatomy.' He had just put on his old 'shooting' coat, which he wore usually when working, and alone, and lit his long German pipe, and was walking contemplatively up and down the untidy queer-looking room, which Hel called the 'Literary and Scientific Institute,' when Hel herself entered, doubt and some annoyance in her usually bright and placid face.

'Hullo!' exclaimed the Professor, cheerfully, expelling about twelve quarts of smoke, 'what do you want? Like to hear about the cranial nerves of the elasmobranch fish. You look as if something had stimulated your own cranial nerves. Sit down, child, and tell us, in the language of my youth: What's the row?'

Now Hel was not a constitutionally weak or hysterical girl, so it will be supposed that it was not without some reason that there were two glimmers very like

tears in her eyes. The Professor noticed this.

'I came to talk to you, papa, about several things. I want to get things right in my mind. It all seems in a state of fever and bewilderment. I know I'm not talking lucidly—but——'

'Go on, my bairn, tell it your own way.'

'Well, I don't know what to do about religion—and another thing—I have taken to thinking for myself about it, rather, lately, and have got in a dreadful muddle. I am not sure what I ought to believe.'

'Believe what seems to you reasonable. But tell me some more about your difficulty.'

'Mr. Exeter has been talking to me about my not coming to all the services, and says that I ought not to associate with Mr. Laurence. He has got some notion of the

sort of opinion he has—and says they will bring — him — to — h—hell.' And she looked very miserable and went on with a little break in her voice: 'And Mr. Laurence says he is not afraid.'

'Exeter is a havering old idiot, with all respect to him. Is that all?' The Professor opened his eyes at this solicitude for Mr. Laurence's eternal welfare.

'And he said I ought to use my influence with you.'

'Oh, I'm included, eh? He's very kind; well?'

'And I think he must be wrong, somehow.'

'Thanks. So do I. Now, look here, Hel. As you have come to me for opinions, you shall have them, in plain English. Don't be frightened, but just think according to reason and justice, if you can, irrespective of what anybody has told you. What right has Mr. Exeter, or Mr. Anybody, to con-

sign me and our young friend to eternal fire, because we don't admire his services and his views?'

'But that is not the reason. It would be for our want of faith.'

'If I'm any judge of human nature—of James Exeter's human nature, at any rate—I think it is offended human vanity, rather than divine wrath, that consigns us to perdition.'

'He says it is our sinful nature.'

Hel had evidently digested her doctrines well. They were not to be hurriedly disturbed. It had taken a long process of Laurentian badinage and sentiment to get them into their present condition of disorder.

'Our sinful nature—hem! You look sinful, don't you? Why do you suppose people ever sin, as you call it?'

'Because they are weak and tempted, I suppose.'

'Who made them weak, who makes the temptation, who makes the tempter?'

'Oh! *that* was the sin of Adam.'

'*What* was the sin of Adam? The moral of his story will serve equally well whether it be true or not. He was made ignorant, and tolerably idle—innocent, you and Milton might call it—and was punished for yielding to the temptation placed in his way to obtain very useful knowledge. I should say he behaved quite right, and had no business to remain ignorant and idle, nicknaming beasts, without troubling to distinguish them by any decent system, based on knowledge. Supposing I forbade you, when you were little, to enter this room, so provoking your natural curiosity, and then laid the key in a conspicuous position on the dining-room table, and walked up and down in the cool of the evening outside, keeping an eye on you through the window, ready to dash in and box your ears

as soon as you laid your fingers on the key, shouldn't I be guilty of constructing an elaborate trap for you, for the pleasure of boxing your ears? Ought I not to receive the greatest castigation?'

'I suppose so,' said Hel, laughing a little.

A great weight was slowly dislodging itself from her mind; not that it was going to leave it just yet—that must be a work of time; but our old friend the thin edge of the wedge had been inserted by Laurence's pleasant mockery and picturesque arguments, and was being now driven home by the direct sledge-hammer of Professor Miller.

'If those are all the ideas of justice and happiness you get from Exeter's shop, the sooner you leave off dealing there the better. I am glad you have come to me about it, bairnie. I would not interfere with you, because I thought you happy and contented, but when it comes to this

trouble of mind, it becomes time to talk a little common sense. You have been using your own judgment a little lately. Perhaps I may thank young Laurence for that, eh?'

Hel blushed, and looked uncomfortable.

'What made me come to you, was—I ought to have begun by telling you that Mr. Aloysius Jones, the new curate, you know——'

'I don't know. However?'

'Was talking to me this afternoon a great deal. He has just come from Oxford or somewhere, with all the new ideas and so on, and I couldn't help thinking him rather forward, considering that he was only introduced a day or two ago. He told me, among other things, that he was my spiritual father, and wanted me to promise to confess to him. I said I must ask you first, and he said he hoped I would not, and went away looking rather put out.'

The Professor's brows contracted, and his fingers toyed absently with a thick stick which lay in a corner near him. He only said, however:

'I had rather you made me your confessor, if you want one. But I don't want you to tell me anything you had rather not. I may depend on your coming to me in any more trouble of this or any other kind?'

'Yes, papa.'

'Well, now run away and make yourself happy. I'm going to be busy, and fill the place with smoke. Think over what I said. Good-night.'

Hel kissed her father and withdrew.

That night the Professor told Mrs. Miller of the Aloysius Jones incident first of all. Mrs. Miller was shocked and startled. Then he suggested that she should keep her eye on Hel a little more as regarded her religious practices, and not allow her to

carry them too far. Then he hinted that she (Hel) was not precisely in her normal condition, and seemed, in fact, a little out of sorts, and suggested a little dissipation in London as a remedy.

Mrs. Miller had no objection.

The next morning, after making a good breakfast, the Professor put a cigar in his mouth, the before-mentioned thick stick in his hand, and walked into the hamlet which composed the parish of St. Wotan. On the road he met Dr. McSwiney, who said :

'Never saw ye look so upright in your life, Professor. Hwat are ye after doing with yourself so early ?'

'Well, I'll tell you, McSwiney, my friend.' (I wish I could reproduce the accents of the two *medici*, one of Dublin and the other of Edinburgh.) 'One of those twopenny-halfpenny young sumphs of St. Wotan's has thought proper to be grossly

impertinent to my daughter' (the Professor pronounced 'gross' to rhyme with 'loss') 'by telling her it was her duty to confess to him.'

'And ye're going to thrash him? By the powers, it's the happiest day of me life!' said the excited little Celt. 'Won't you let me do it, now, Professor?' (Dr. McSwiney pronounced 'Professor' 'Prefasser.')

'I think not, McSwiney. You can follow and look in at the window, if you like.'

'And catch him while you evict him through it? Thank ye. Good-bye, Professor, and good luck to ye.'

'Good-bye.'

Professor Miller discovered the lodgings of the Rev. Aloysius Jones, and was admitted. Mr. Jones rose with some little surprise from the perusal of the *Church Times*. The Professor went to the point at once.

'May I ask if you are Mr. Jones?'

'I am, sir.'

'I am John Miller, the father of the young lady you were conversing with at the Bishop's garden-party yesterday.'

Mr. Jones bowed, and looked uncomfortable.

'I wish to ask if you endeavoured, among other things, to persuade her to confess to you?'

'No, sir; auricular confession is not a doctrine of the Church.'

'To do anything, then, bearing any resemblance to confession?'

'I advised her to confide periodically to me, in virtue of my office as spiritual father and director, her mental troubles or neglected duties, or, in fact, sin, to obtain the Church's direction and absolving prayers thereby.'

'You did? Well I, in virtue of *my* office as her fleshly father, have come here

to request you not to give her such advice, or advice resembling it, in the future; and to give notice that should you, or any other spiritual father, do so hereafter, I propose to administer to such spiritual father a vehement corporeal beating, vulgarly called a sound thrashing, to the best of my ability with this stick.'

Thus said the Professor in his usual mild voice, his accent lending a touch of humour to his words, his stick firmly clasped and shaking slightly, his usually stooping frame looking upright and powerful, his long hair ruffled and mane-like, his brows slightly contracted, and determination lurking in his lantern jaw.

The curate backed slightly, and said:

'Have you no respect for my cloth, sir?'

'Not the least in the world. Where you don't respect the man, moreover, it is of little consequence whether one respects the

teguments that he stands in. Because a man chooses to bedrape himself in shiny black broadcloth, he is no less answerable for his conduct as a member of an ordinary community, no more privileged to commit impertinences than another, and no less amenable to the natural consequences. If you please to apply to the nearest magistrate to bind me to keep the peace, I will attend and publicly give the reason why with great pleasure, and the public will then give its verdict. If you let the matter drop, I will. Good-morning.'

And the valiant old heathen withdrew, and walked home satisfied with himself.

The Rev. Aloysius Jones did two things. He wrote a letter to the *Church Times* entitled, 'A Modern Diocletian,' and then went away and complained to his chief, Mr. Exeter, from whom he got the consoling reply:

'How could you be such a fool, if I may

so express it, Mr. Jones? You mustn't precipitate matters like this. I believe in Church principles myself, but not in these extreme views.'

Mr. Jones shortly afterwards resigned, and went away to some parish where the functions of the spiritual father were more regarded, and may now be wiped out of our history for ever, being merely the accessory episodic weapon in the hand of Fate to give a shock to the already wavering faith of Hel in Church supremacy and religion generally.

The Miller family went away for a short period to London. There Hel had opportunities, hitherto neglected, for what our ancestors called improving her mind: namely, she had easy access to treasures of art, libraries of modern literature, good concerts, comfortable theatres, and intelligent society. These things mean a good deal, taken together, to a girl who has

been brought up in a place where the treasures of art and literature were confined to those her own house furnished in permanence, where good music was seldom heard, where a theatre did not exist, and where society was far from intelligent. But this was not all that London did for her.

One day, while wandering, catalogue in hand, in the remarkable exhibition known as the Grosvenor Gallery, she was accosted by an amazed and joyous-looking young man, with long black hair, armed with another catalogue and a note-book. This was Mr. Maximilian Laurence, writing a criticism of the collection for an influential periodical. How many of Hel's opinions went into that criticism in the next half hour is difficult to say. He gave her the credit for the article when it appeared. After this incident, Max called at the lodgings of the Millers, in Clarges Street,

with some frequency, and acted as guide and personal conductor to the sights of the metropolis, which Hel found to be more interesting than she had expected. After about a fortnight of this pleasing occupation, her mother remarked that Hel's symptoms of ill-health and depression had disappeared.

CHAPTER III.

'Mir erloschen ist der süssen
Liebes Sterne goldene Pracht,
Abgrund gähnt zu meine Füssen . . .
Nimm' mich auf, uralte Nacht.'

H. Heine.

It ought to have been 7·25 by the time-table, and from *à priori* considerations, but was 7·40 in reality by Greenwich, when the train drew up at Winterdale and disgorged Jack Miller and his luggage on the platform. He put his luggage into a cab, giving the man directions to drive at his leisure to Eave Lodge, and walked out of the station, himself, a dusty travel-worn suit on his body, a

swinging switch in his hands, a cigar in his mouth, and '*Messieurs les étudiants, s'en vont à la chaumière*' on his lips, he strode on, meaning to take the field-path homewards, turning his back on the town, whose tower and roofs were mistily glistening in the still evening light coming from the horizon, from a pale fire-like streak of greenish yellow sky under a dark long purple cloud in the west. It was a warm evening early in May, and the day had been showery, and the evening was half mist, half brightness, from time to time.

It seemed to be now clearing for the night; and this strange and beautiful sunset sky hung over the fields and the dear old valley where he had lived and roamed and lounged from childhood up—where he had wandered in the sunlit days and starlight nights of long ago with the first girl whom he had really felt he loved

beyond all womankind, and whom he meant to love (for who could help it?), in spite of all that man or devil could do unto him. And his eyes were fixed on this distant valley. It was his destination now, and he trembled with the excitement of the proximity of Rosa after his year or more of absence. It was kind, he thought, of Nature to provide such a beautiful evening for his return. It made him recollect vividly such days in the unforgotten and unforgetable spring two years before, when that small seventeen-year-old girl had made the whole world bright to his eyes, and had given him stray and strange flashes of intelligence from her original and inquiring mind as they strolled through the dark fir-wood, when the red sunlight was low on the sandy ground between the stems of the trees, and had listened to all his views and opinions on life and the earth, and art and

everything else, till they both had discovered a fresh beauty in the earth and a new joy in existing.

The marks of Parisian life were on Jack's face. His jaw seemed a little bonier, his cheek a little thinner, and his eyes a little more deep-set, and his beard had been allowed to grow and was trimmed into an Elizabethan point; his hair was rather long; his eyes, obeying their painter's instinct, roamed over the landscape and saw more sad beauty in the sunset than they had felt capable of appreciating for many a month.

He began whistling the waltzing melody, 'Geliebt und Verloren,' long ago fatally riveted in his brain, and suddenly said within himself, 'That is all very well as a waltz—but if it turned out true? I remember how it haunted me all night at that fancy ball.' The idea made him quicken his pace and smite the tips of

the grass-stalks with unnecessary violence. 'Well, damn it, I've no reason for thinking of that; I suppose it's the effect of the sunset.'

What is there in a sunset that makes it so saddening even at the best of times? Is it because it suggests to us the loss and death of something too beautiful and too necessary to happiness to be lost and to die? or because, in some mysterious way, it brings to our minds all those so fair and so unspeakably dear who are lost and gone, or who we fear soon will be, as the fairest and dearest of all usually are, on this lovely and cruel earth?

Jack passed a young couple from Winterdale out for a walk. Both were commonplace-looking, almost ugly; but they seemed happy, and trudged along in that deep and enduring silence which all enamoured young people in the lower social grades seem to prefer to conversa-

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tion. Jack was rather amused, and pitied each for having selected the other, and wondered if they cared whether there was a sunset or not, and whether the young man would not feel rather envious and long for a changed lot if he suddenly saw a small and graceful form come out of the dark fir-wood at the edge of the path to meet Jack with welcoming brown eyes, and let the same dying sun-ray glitter upon herself and him, as they disappeared into the forest darkness on their road to the luminous west. You see, Jack's mind was in a rather odd condition. The prevailing figure, or 'leading lady,' had taken possession of all his ideas, and there was something of her in everything that he saw. He almost looked at the forest to see Rosa emerge as the above notion occurred to him; but she did not; so he plunged into the wood in the increasing twilight. Through the

branches above his head a single pale star was visible. 'O Du mein holden Abendstern!' remarked Jack, as he journeyed on over the silent ground, carpeted with brown needle-foliage, cones, and small branches.

He felt like some one in a German fairy tale, the scenery was so weirdly pretty and duskily romantic, and almost looked for kobolds and gnomes among the dark rigid stems. It was just the place and just the time for the elves to come out riding, with their tiny horns and bells. Jack thought of the man in the moonlit forest who saw the elf-queen ride by, smiling and nodding at him, and then wondered if it should mean death, as it was legendarily supposed, or loss of love.

'However,' thought he, 'I have seen no elf-queen as yet.'

Jack's first and obvious duty was to go home and apprise his anxious relations of

his arrival. But young men in his condition seldom, if ever, do their first and obvious duty in its proper place and order. Jack made for the back gate of the small garden that appertained to Mrs. Frankland's villa on emerging from the wood. When he reached it, he leaned over it, and listened and looked, trying to keep up the delight of anticipation by postponing the delight of fulfilment. The drawing-room window was open, and through it came light and sound — light from the piano candles, which were assisting the Marquise de Tortoleone to evolve sound in the form of an unfeeling and dashing interpretation of 'Geliebt und Verloren,' which she had no doubt found lying about on the instrument. She played better, perhaps, and more correctly than Rosa, but with the expression of one who never had either 'Geliebt' or 'Verloren.'

'Why in sin should *she* be there?

However, we'll wade in and surprise the crowd generally. Suppose she'll make a point of telling my people I came here first.'

As he opened the gate silently he saw a portion of a girl's body, of unmistakable grace, visible between the branches of a large yew in the upward slope of the garden; on the shoulder a dusky trail of hair, with a dull red ribbon round it at the back of the neck. Jack leaned forward eagerly in the highest stage of excitement, and his eyes looked strainedly into this yew, and his face grew a shade paler. Fate had so far favoured him, he thought, as to let him greet Rosa alone, under this twilight, before he had spoken to any other soul in England of his acquaintance. A second look showed him a male human arm round this girl's waist, and the face appertaining to the arm was in the act of—kissing the face appertaining to the waist.

The form of a young man in evening-dress then became visible, recognisable as Alfred de Tortoleone.

Jack turned silently round and went out through the gateway he had half entered, and walked quickly back into the footpath through the fir-wood. His first impulse was to laugh heartily, and say, almost aloud, 'So Max was right, after all!' He walked on, remarking that more stars had appeared, that it was getting darker, and that the western horizon was quite pale, with long purple streaks. The colour that followed the sunset had faded away. The moon was just rising in the east, large and yellow, indistinctly visible through the trees, and its light mixed strangely with that of departing day. Along with its golden gleams came also through the trees for a few moments the faint sounds of 'Geliebt und Verloren.' His next thought was :

'I wonder if I shall ever forget that melody? If you could only know, in there, in the lighted house full of music, Rosa, that I am standing out here, and listening, and laughing, and thinking what a fool I am!'

He felt a strange desire to walk on all night, through the wood, over valleys and downs, until the dawn came. Ideas came into his head, succeeded by intervals of apparent absence of all thought, except a vague wish to count the stars as they came out. He scarcely felt any particular grief of which he was conscious at the moment, but an oppressive apprehension of a bad time to come.

How should he spend the time at home, now that the light was taken out of his days? A man like Laurence would have written songs, and buried his love and sorrow in them, as many a man had done before him. Jack could not write songs;

he could only read them. At this moment he wished he had not read so many. One verse from the great agony of a great singer came into his head, and refused to leave it:

'Das ist ein Flöten und Geigen,
Trompeten schmettern drein,
Da tanzt den Hochzeitreigen
Die Herz allerliebste mein.'

At last he reached a stile, and sat on it, took out a cigar, lit it, and looked around him and above him, stretched his limbs, and uttered an audible execration of a vehement nature, followed by the observation, 'What a hopeless fool I've made of myself!'

Never mind, Jack. We all make fools of ourselves, once at least, if not oftener, in the course of our lives. Jack recognised this fact, and failed to be cheered by it. It seldom improves our position much to be reminded how many other people have

been in it before. It only tended in Jack's case to convince him that the time had always been 'out of joint' since any time began, and that the dislocation was of an incurably permanent nature, devised by the 'cursed spite' that governs time. Jack reflected over his cigar:

'Way of the world, I suppose. Funny old world! Wonder who is responsible for the blasted old machine. I am afraid no one. I wish there were Some One. I would like to have him here alone with me and a thick stick on this grass plot for ten minutes—that's all.

'"O du mein herzallerliebstes Lieb',
Warum verliessest du mich!"'

This he almost quoted aloud, as a vision came across him of the clinging arms and scented hair of Rosa, when saying good-bye one summer night that seemed so long ago.

'I suppose,' he thought, 'she is bestowing similar caresses now, and being equally confidential to the other young man. Why not?'

Jack folded his arms and buried his face in them on the top bar of the stile. He was a tall grown and bearded man, and had by now tasted the best and the worse dishes of this curious earth-kitchen. Still, whether it was an oath or a sob that sent such a shock through his body, only the nightingale in the tree above him knows, and has not thought fit to communicate. The nightingales, you see, receive so many confidences, and see so many strange, sad, and glad sights, that they are habitually reticent, and cautious as to details. Besides, their language, though expressive, is limited. Some one came in the direction of the stile. Jack stood up suddenly, and puffed fiercely at his cigar in an elaborately careless attitude. It was the couple he had previously

passed on their way home. They were now conversing in short sentences, composed of words of few syllables, idiomatic and phonetic expressions. On seeing Jack, they held their peace, and went on their way, and he saw their faces no more.

'How d——d happy those two idiots look! And their love-making is about as interesting a process as among the protozoa. Wish I was a protozoön, with a good appetite, no imagination, and no sentiments, and no excitement greater than that furnished by splitting periodically in two. We specialise functions to organs. In an amœba, the whole beast breaks in two. In higher animals only the heart. Still, if I were one, I should probably get done for by some medusa. Pretty things, medusæ. No heart has as yet been detected in them by zoologists, and they hurt if you touch them. What the devil is the use of all this study, and all my life? Wonder if I

am turning into an idiot? Feel very like it. Well, must go home now, and be cheerful, I suppose.'

Having arrived at this resolution, Jack walked in the direction precisely opposite to that in which his home lay, namely, towards the Winterdale railway station, where he found there was a train due for town in ten minutes. For that train Jack Miller took a ticket, and then proceeded to take two glasses of 'straight' brandy at the refreshment-bar, reading by the gas there a hitherto unregarded note from Max, which ran thus:

'Mind you look me up as you pass through town. If you come in in the evening you will probably find O'Kelly, and Deane, and Smithson, and one or two girls, when they have got away from the green-room and had time to wash their faces. I cannot answer for the feast of reason, but have no doubt about the flow

of soul. Shall be meeting O'Kelly first at the Green Dragon; better come there about ten or half-past.'

'Just in time to do that,' thought Jack. He had nearly forgotten this invitation.

The train came up to time, and Jack plunged himself, his cigar, and his sorrow into the corner of a third-class smoking carriage. The brandy made him feel temporarily affable and rather bitterly humorous. A tall and shapely soldier, one of Tortoleone's hussars, got in, chuckling at a joke of somebody's, and twisting a riding-whip in his hand. He sat down in the corner opposite Jack, and regarded him critically and with some admiration, and came to his own conclusions, according to his lights.

'Hard up, I guess. Something wrong, anyhow—good shoulders and legs—soon find out.'

Jack felt it rather hard that he should be pursued up to town by this villainous

garishness of gold braid and blue cloth, which offended his æsthetic eye more than ever now.

After a little desultory conversation, consisting of requests for matches and remarks on the fineness of the evening, this wily warrior, observing from long practice that Jack's face was dissatisfied, his attitude careless and defiant, and his clothes neither new nor clean, thought he had hit upon a proper and legitimate prey, and said, with much blandness :

'I say, young man, would you like to join the cavalry? Smart fellow like you, etc., etc. Have it all your own way with the girls, you know.'

'So it seems,' said poor Jack, with a laugh.

'Oh, you've seen us in Winterdale, I suppose. Don't remember your face. Took you for a stranger here.'

'I have not been here for some time.

I fancy I will not take your shilling as long as I have a few of my own left.'

'Hum! not hard up—must be a case of girl, I suppose. I'm no good here,' reflected the collector of recruits, and then said aloud: 'I see by your speech, sir,' ('Irishman evidently,' thought Jack), 'that you are a gentleman, and you seem in some sort of trouble, and I hope you won't think what I have said any offence.'

'Of course not.'

'Because lots of gentlemen do join us from time to time, for different reasons. I joined in a fit of bad temper, because my sweetheart left me for a linesman, when I drove a car in Dublin. I thought I'd cut out the linesman with his bl—dy coat, and I did, a year after, and then told the girl she'd better marry the red-coat if she could, after all, as I knew at least six girls better than her in every town I'd been stationed in. She cried. I said, "Good-

night, Nora, then," and walked. I expect to have a knife put into me when I meet her again—but I don't mean to meet her again.'

The hussar beguiled the journey in conversation of this kind, coloured by the quaint tragi-comic touches of his native land, until Jack felt sufficiently drawn to him to offer to drink with him at the terminus. The soldier accepted, and had a glass of bitter. Jack had another 'straight' brandy before he shook hands with the soldier, saying:

'You're a d——d good fellow. I hope I shall meet you again.'

Then he hailed a cab and dashed off into the Strand. He made the cabman drop him at the Gaiety Theatre, which was just emptying, and walked on up the slight acclivity on that side till he was in a region somewhere half-way between the Strand and Drury Lane.

In this neighbourhood he seemed at home, and dived without difficulty into the private bar of the Green Dragon, an antique, beetle-browed tavern, frequented by actors and those who take an interest in them, a few literary men, mostly young, and the accessory crowd of loafers always to be found in bars in this neighbourhood. In another moment he was shaking hands with Laurence.

'Well met, Miller! This, my dear child,' he explained to the pretty, but flippant girl who served in this department, 'is Tannhäuser. He has escaped from the Venusberg, and has come back to sober and decorous London.'

Jack laughed and shook hands with her.

'How are you, Jessie?'

'You are just in time,' said Max. 'Have a drink before we go?'

'Don't mind if I do. Shall we swindle?'

'No; you are the stranger and pilgrim. I stand. What shall it be?'

'Cognac, "straight," please, Jessie.'

'Cold Irish for me.'

Jack gulped down his fourth glass of brandy, lit a cigar, and said he was ready.

'Just feel fit for supper, and all kinds of dissipation. What a splendid evening! How mean those lamps must feel when they look at those stars! . . . You have no idea, Max, how jolly it is to get into the old streets and pubs of London again. There is a certain nameless charm about the dingy old thoroughfares and courts, where one has spent happy hours long ago, before learning what life was really made of. No, my young friend, I do not want a *Globe* or *Echo*, and I think you ought to be in bed. I don't care how many empires may have exploded in the last six hours, and I don't take the faintest interest in

the death of a hundred and forty colliers in Wales by flooding; nor, my dear sir, do I want the *Matrimonial News*—God forbid! Yes, Max, you were going to say——?'

'I wasn't. But I will if you like. You are drunk already.'

'All right. I know it. So don't tell me again.'

'Have you come straight from Paris?'

'No; from Winterdale.'

'From Winterdale! Phe—eu! Well, look here, let us take a couple of hansoms; we shall never get there, the four of us, at this rate' (there were two men, painters, friends of Laurence, of the party); 'we are occupying the whole pavement, and you are attracting attention, Miller. I don't wish to go to my address like a circus, with little boys grinning behind, and running in front.'

After an interval of rapid and noisy hansom progress—

'Remember our last *Kneipe* at Oxbridge, Miller?' said Max, when the guests were seated round his table.

'Rather! Vive la jeunesse! Vive Mimi Pinson!'

'You have just come from the land of Mimi Pinson, I understand?' said Arthur O'Kelly, the young Irish poet, with long auburn hair, and a cigarette in his mouth.

'Yes. And I mean to drink now to the good old times—the days of long ago, whose half-forgotten pictures rise up in one's mind like ghosts out of their graves—pale ghosts, with the faded relics of beauty in them. Drink with me all of you: the old student days, the jovial faithful men we knew, the charming faithless girls we loved—most of them gone away together, into eternity or the antipodes!'

'*Prosit!*' shouted Max, as he emptied

his tall German *Schoppen,* filled with *Erlangener* beer. 'Now, the game has begun,' he went on, 'let us follow the noble example of our friend, who has drunk to the memory of the Past. Fill your glasses, and drink with me to the Future! the poets-laureate, the R.A.'s, the prime-donne that we shall all be some day.'

And a general emptying of glasses took place, and the conversation became lively. The other guests were the two painters alluded to, and the sisters Hettie and Lizzie Vernon, of the —— Theatre.

O'Kelly stood up and said:

'We will now drink to the Present, and I will ask Laurence for a suitable song.'

They drank, and Max went to his piano and sang, 'Life let us cherish.'

And the night wore on, and waxed gay and riotous, and redolent of song, love and

wine—those three wonderful things that keep the world spinning, let philosophers say what they please about gravitation and Galileo.

CHAPTER IV.

'In den Küssen welche Lügen!
Welche Wonne in den Schein!
Ach, wie süss ist das Betrügen,
Süsser das Betrogen-sein!'

H. HEINE.

ROSA was of course to blame, but scarcely so much so as is at first sight apparent. She was under no particular promise to Jack, excepting of course those charmingly vague and impossible promises usually indulged in by lovers, which everyone knows to be hyperbolic *façons de parler*.

Yes, my young friend, swear you will never forget her; it amuses you and don't

hurt her much. We all know that you will make spills of each other's letters this day six months.

It is true that what is known in the technical language of matchmakers as a 'mutual understanding' existed between these two. At least, it may be supposed that a mutual understanding exists between two persons who are not related to one another, but are seldom out of one another's society, and embrace passionately at frequent intervals when they imagine themselves unobserved.

But no distinct and explicit engagement had ever been mentioned as existing between them except by gossip, and what did exist, whatever it was, had failed to prevent Jack, in his year or so of study in Paris, from making love to every pretty girl that gave him the chance, always, of course, keeping Rosa in his mind's eye as guiding star and 'leading lady.' Rosa had

heard something of this hinted, and had guessed the rest, and failed to see why she should not endeavour to make the time pass till his return in a corresponding manner.

It was necessary to her, she discovered, after six weeks of Jack's absence, to have a good-looking young man 'around' at her bidding—as a sort of playfellow, in fact. De Tortoleone answered this purpose very well. He had not Jack's talents, it is true. He could not talk like him, or draw, but to make up for this he had a very presentable person, frequently adorned with a gay and becoming uniform, danced well, sang well, and was as convenient a source of bonbons and cigarettes as anyone else.

So Rosa found. But she was playing with edged tools, and became rather more attached to this young man than she intended or he deserved. Hence this touch-

ing moonlit scene in the garden, which had sent Jack to London in a delirious whirl of anger, amusement, pity, and brandy. It was just what was to be expected from a girl of her careless, self-indulging disposition, and inflammable, sensuous, physical nature. She is not the first, nor likely to be the last of her kind; and as long as such exist, men will fall in love with them, maugre the warnings of generations of experienced sufferers. 'C'est plus fort qu'eux.'

But her Nemesis was approaching sooner than she expected. After the Tortoleone party were gone, which was soon after Jack had, Rosa went into the garden again to smoke a cigarette, or look at the moon, or catch a cold, or something equally rational and necessary, and remarked a small, square, whitish object lying on the grass where she had been standing with the young hussar.

This, on examination, proved to be an envelope, addressed to that individual at the Cavalry Barracks, Winterdale, in a hand resembling that in which milliners direct parcels — the average hand of a moderately ill-educated female, such as abound in this country, yet withal showing a certain dash suggestive of independence, or a good imitation of it. The owner had probably whisked it out unawares with his handkerchief.

Rosa looked at it, and, not being a heroine with a supernatural sense of honour, debated rather excitedly with herself whether she should read what it contained. She was possessed naturally of a great and nervous curiosity as to what might be inside that square envelope with the loose, bold handwriting. A breach of honour does one no discredit in the eyes of the world when it is not seen by them. If it were not for society, honour would

not be necessary. One could not very well be honourable on a desert island. When one is alone and unperceived, the rest of society practically does not exist for that moment. One is, therefore, temporarily in the position of a desert island.

Some such line of argument as this, incoherently and rapidly strung together by Rosa's conscience (which possessed all the happy elasticity of youth and health), preceded the opening and reading, on her part, of the letter. We will adopt her reasoning, for want of a better, and do the same. It was from an old acquaintance, into whose correspondence we have already had a glance :

'1003, Paphos Street, S. Belgravia.

'Dear Alfred,

'Thanks for letter. Will meet you at Victoria, ladies' waiting-room, as you

propose. Be sure and come. What are you doing at Winterdale? Spooning, I suppose, which accounts for my not having seen your face for at least a fortnight.

'With love,

'MINNIE.

'Alfred de Tortoleone, Esq.,

'—th Hussars.'

This made Rosa spiritually 'squirm,' to use her own expressive language. She put the letter back into its—scabbard I nearly said, pocketed it, and walked into the house, went deliberately to her bedroom, lay face downwards on the bed, and cried—a thing she had not done for years.

'So he was humbugging and amusing himself at my expense! Oh, Jack, you used to wonder if I ever would grow up! *I am grown up now.*'

Then she washed her face, and looked

in the glass—from habit, perhaps, or to see if her hair had turned *quite* white—and thought:

'I wonder if she is pretty. I suppose she is. How am I to act now? I can't stay here and talk to Alfred, and listen to him. Be the death of me. I should do something insane on a sudden. Wish Jack would come back. By Jove! I'll go to Paris and see old Taylor. Paris is better than here, anyway, and she can get on just as well, and better, without me downstairs. Bother propriety! He'll amuse me, and is gentleman enough to take care of me, and I like him better than his sister a long way. He is straightforward and not a coward. And then I shall see Jack there. Wish you had never gone, Jack! I suppose you've got some Minnie too.'

Here Rosa performed another small weep, and then calmly put on her hat

and jacket, put an ulster over her arm, put a brush and comb in its pockets, concealed a five-pound note and some silver about her person, walked out at the front door, and proceeded quickly in the direction of the railway-station. It is very strange what an attraction railway-stations have for disappointed lovers. Mrs. Frankland was dozing over a magazine in her drawing-room.

Rosa discovered that a train would pass for London in twenty minutes. So there was nothing for her to do but walk up and down the platform, being too impatient and excited to sit in a waiting-room.

The attractions of Winterdale Junction were not more numerous or exhilarating than those of any other provincial junction. Rosa studied the visage of 'Dr. Perry Davis, the Vegetable Pain-Killer,' who looked capable of killing anything else at a moment's notice; also, 'Messrs.

Sutton's Miraculous Mangel-wurzels,' and the 'Warnings to Families Removing or Warehousing,' on the part of 'Taylor's Depository, Pimlico, London, S.W.' The 'line' in this exhibition was devoted naturally to affairs of the line, viz., time-tables and excursion arrangements.

The platform was occupied by several soldiers, of course one or two working-men, several milk-cans, a curate, and an old lady in the midst of a circular barricade of luggage. From this old lady Rosa first learnt the sensation of being snorted at. Rosa was young, prepossessing, and alone, at nine in the evening, on a railway platform; therefore Virtue, personified in the form of an old lady (with the old lady's permission), snorted at her. This is, as dear old Victor would say, the contest of the known against the unknown, of good assured against bad presumed, it being one of the distinguishing

features of the assured good to presume the bad. But this old lady must have been good, for she was elderly and ill-favoured; and ugliness is the greatest safeguard and sign of virtue in the sex, also age. The evidence of two philosophers concurs in this; to wit, Dorine, the *soubrette* of Molière, and the noble author of 'Don Juan'—and both are in a position to judge.

Rosa, in a fit of sudden economy, took a second-class ticket, and at last was able to sit in a dusky corner of a carriage, the only one in which there was room, it being a cattle-market day in a neighbouring town on the line. Of course, therefore, the train was late.

'Ticket, please, miss; thank you!' And a voluminous guard, with a pair of clippers and a bull's-eye lantern, succeeded quite unconsciously in bringing all the nine pairs of eyes in the car to bear on poor

Rosa. It certainly was a little unusual to the travellers on this portion of the line to see a pretty, pale, and one must add rather sulky-looking girl curled up in the corner of a second-class smoking-carriage (as it happened to be) at this time of night, gazing straight before her at nothing particular, as if unaware of anyone's presence. The occupants of this car were mostly of an appearance between the farmer and the groom, and were hotly discussing the merits of 'young bullicks,' except when they became suddenly and unanimously silent in order to stare gloomily at Rosa.

She had no adventures on the journey. The fellow-travellers behaved in the most sheepishly virtuous manner the whole way. One young man, it is true, blushed in a marked and bricky manner, and made bold to ask 'if she minded his smoking, as he was sitting opposite to

her ;' to which she replied, in an unembarrassed and uninterested tone, 'Of course you can smoke ; I don't mind. I've no right to forbid it, if I did.'

This was rude and ungracious. But then Rosa was in a very bad temper, and wanted the journey to be over, wanted her supper, wanted to smoke herself, and dare not, and wanted a great many more things which she had not got, and was altogether what she termed 'real bad.' Her reply crushed any diffident and bucolic attempts at gallantry her *vis-à-vis* might have entered upon, and made him feel that he had said something rude instead of something civil, as he had imagined. He blushed a little more, and smoked vigorously. The journey ultimately ended, as journeys occasionally do, even on modern British lines, in the safe though late arrival of the train at the London terminus.

'Any luggage, miss?'

'No.'

And Rosa marched to the end of the station, where the offices and timetables were. Here she made the embarrassing discovery that she could not leave for Paris till the next day, nor, even did she desire it, return to Winterdale that night. Therefore, she must remain in London. An awkward discovery for a young lady who had never travelled in England, and never been an hour in London before, and was practically a foreigner.

Holding in consideration these facts, it is scarcely surprising that she felt a little bewildered at this temporary upset to her rather vague calculations. She went into a waiting-room and held a council of war with herself. As she was by nature and original sin a cool and independent girl, the determination she came to was, that she would go to Paris next day, in spite of

this disappointment at the outset. The important and pressing question, however, was what to do now? Sleep, she felt she could not. She had a vague yearning for excitement of some kind.

She walked out of the station, and along a wide straight street just outside it, meaning to ask advice of the first decent-looking person wearing a uniform whom she might come across. She was unacquainted with the aspect of a London 'bobby;' but her experience of Parisian life told her that a uniform meant responsibility, and that those who wore it were, with certain exceptions, trustworthy.

A few minutes' walking brought her within sight of that tower which overshadows the Chambers of British Legislature (and occasionally contains a refractory Legislator as a prisoner), and soon after she found herself near one of the entrances of another institution in Broad

Sanctuary, Westminster, conveniently near to the aforesaid Chambers of Legislature, and to the College where British youth are taught, and to the ancient Abbey, where it is their glorious privilege to worship, and to the Hospital, as a final and necessary accommodation for the neighbourhood.

This institution, at the moment of Rosa's arrival, was disgorging its last inmates, previous to closing. Rosa looked at them.

It was just the time of year when many students of the two ancient Universities of Oxbridge and Camford were going through the process known in their interesting *patois* as 'going down,' which means, in the case of those who are not restrained by examinations or experience, going *up* straight from their colleges and lodgings to the various hives where what the author of 'Maud' calls the 'gross mud-honey of town' can be obtained by the diligent and affluent seeker. The result

was, that the crowd issuing from the institution aforesaid was considerable, bi-sexual, and what the newspapers call 'brilliant.'

Young men were there in large numbers, with a certain generic resemblance of costume, style, and expression of face. The costume was that of the latest fashion devised, consisting of the inevitable cylinder hat, a close-fitting black coat, single-breasted, with four, or it may be five, buttons, very loose trousers and very tight boots. The crutch of the present day was as yet an unrevealed weapon to the youth of the period, who were mostly accompanied by umbrellas, or ash sticks with silver snakes twining round them at a distance of six inches below the top.

The styles of face were assimilated as much as possible by what one might mistake for a sort of 'general order' as to the shaving to be adopted (by those, at least, to whom nature had vouchsafed a valid

excuse for performing that operation). The 'general order' was, small whiskers allowed to descend as far as half an inch below the lobe of the ear, and as much moustache as possible, the possible not being a very alarming amount. The expression of countenance, also adopted apparently by 'general order,' was one of extreme haughtiness, rather over-acted nonchalance, to be momentarily abolished by occasional flashes of knowingness, which did not look very knowing. If these gentlemen smoked at all, they smoked cigarettes.

They had been amusing themselves within the institution all the evening, and now that it was closing, proposed amusing themselves out of it. In strong contrast to them were the students of the Metropolitan schools of medicine, shabby, pipe-smoking and practical, attired, as they expressively termed it, 'anyhow,' and gazing

with scarcely-concealed amusement and scorn at the imperious-looking youths, that one of them termed 'a crowd of blank 'Varsity men, dressed within an inch of their lives, and just let loose from training and the nursery.'

This strong opinion was vehemently expressed, and overheard, and it is believed that serious consequences followed at the Prætorium restaurant later on. But the Prætorium is accustomed to that, and keeps a sturdy and uniformed 'ejector' on the premises. Lower class restaurants keep a similar official; but they give him no uniform, and style him a 'chucker-out.' It was a remarkable fact that the *carabins* hung together in knots; while each 'Varsity-man was alone, or nearly so. Hansoms were much in demand. The female portion of the crowd was remarkably well dressed, mainly in black, and as a rule (with exceptions) young, and tolerably good-looking,

with here and there a trifle too much powder, and perhaps sometimes the expression a little too vacant, or sullen, or a *soupçon* too brilliant with brandy and soda.

The air was full of the odours of musk and cigarette smoke, and the faint fragrance accompanying all such crowds; and the low sounds of rustling satin, murmured words of low laughter, and click of heels on paving stones.

And in front of the path of these revellers lay the Westminster Hospital, and behind them the grey old Abbey towers, an ironical and grim antithesis.

CHAPTER V.

HUMANITY.

Once upon a time there lived a great philosopher, who, after discovering the blind and grovelling superstitions the majority of humanity laboured under, decided that the best and highest object of worship and adoration for the said humanity was Itself. Humanity, individually, distributively, congregationally, was to worship humanity collectively. Very nice indeed, wasn't it? And each of us could have a separate human shrine to worship at, with blue or brown eyes and yellow or black hair, as of old. So

said the scoffers and the younger disciples.

Before the great philosopher had had time to say for which of its qualities humanity in the wholesale, block form was to be adored, the prejudices of that narrow-minded portion of humanity among whom he lived enclosed him in a House of the Alienated, as his language delicately expressed it. In our straightforward tongue it is termed a lunatic asylum. And a very nice place, too, for people to worship humanity in—a sort of pocket edition of the world. Here is your Emperor of Russia, with a splendid paper-gilt crown, sending out a fresh ukase every five minutes to send the keeper to Tomsk, and then crying because his dinner has not arrived. Here is your assassin—nice looking slab of humanity this one—all mouth and face, no head to speak of, splendid development of hands and feet; latent

power in the feet, especially if hobnailed, rather greater than that in the head. Here is your author, declaiming innumerable sonnets to the most peerless lady, his inestimable mistress and soul's idol, the new moon, and accepting knighthoods of the Order of the Double-Headed Carrion Crow from his friend the emperor. Here is a speculator 'for the rise,' who speculated for too high a rise and 'busted.' He can still do you figuring beautifully up to ten million of decimal places, and does it often. Very nice occupation for him. Here is the man who saw his love drowned before his face, and tried to drown himself afterwards. He is now a cynic like Iago, and says: 'Ere I would say I would drown myself for the love of a guinea-hen, I would change my humanity with a baboon.' And he has made the exchange pretty completely. And so on.

Which of this humanity are to be adored

most, O philosopher? Or are we to go into the greater world, and observe the behaviour of the other superior apes there? The superior apes are, of course, very superior indeed. They are variously classified. Voltaire calls them hammers and anvils. Others divide them into clever knaves and stupid fools, or, as another great person has expressed it: 'Surely them as has plenty money and no brains is made for them as has plenty brains and no money.' It's the same idea, as the Hon. Jemmy Gosling said.

We may observe them filling up cotton bales with sand, we may see them praying, subscribing for the suppression of mendicity, embezzling the subscriptions, doing tread-mill, kicking their wives, selling their daughters and votes, preparing bills for the closure of public-houses, getting helplessly drunk, slaughtering each other with ships and guns and assegais and Henry-

Martinis. For which of these great qualities are we to worship them, if you please? Or is it for that great and all-reconciling quality, human kindness and brotherly love?

This chapter, though you might not at first suppose it, is to describe the sort of human kindness a young girl may get when in that most grievous state of misfortune under the sun, loneliness and friendlessness in London. She is not exactly rare, but the whirlpool is vast enough to make her seem so. She has everything against her—her own ignorance and powerlessness, a careless crowd of jostling competitors, the charitable opinions of a Christian community, perhaps her beauty, and behind all a grim shapeless shadow that is going to overtake everyone, but her apparently first.

On her side she has perhaps some vague principles, to which she means to cling with

a woman's unreasoning tenacity. These find it hard work contending with the despair of inevitable poverty; not a Giant Despair against whom a Greatheart may fight, such a mental Doubting Despair as people may have who feed over-sumptuously every day; but a cuttle-fish Despair, that fastens, sucks, and draws down Greatheart and all into the loathsome depths in which it dwells. Christiana and Greatheart and Co., as far as I can gather, never failed to find roadside refreshment-rooms. A robust fellow like Greatheart requires a good deal of solid beefsteak, not to say bread, to enable him to support his armour and smash his giants. And so it happens sometimes, in London, that a girl sells herself to the highest bidder—and that not a high one—having nothing else to sell, while the lights shine from the large windows in the misty square where the committee of a charitable society are

having their annual banquet. Then a Christian community begins to make things pleasant for her. It sneers at her for not making an 'honest' living, and refuses to employ her as an under-housemaid It describes her as a waif, also a castaway, a sinner, and fallen. It addresses advertisements to her under the above titles, inviting her to meetings where she will be instructed that she is all the above, and much more, and told how to humiliate herself. It never condescends to prove to her that her often hard and weary life is in any way *dis*honest, though it talks loudly of 'making honest women' of people, as if the quality of honesty were suddenly conferred, like the freedom of the City.

The ethical aspects of the question are run through by the lawless rapier of fact, as if they were, as they often are, but paper. Fierce poverty sweeps philosophical

codes of conduct and moral scruples together, and the eternal whirlwind of necessity drives them into the eternal waste-paper baskets prepared from the beginning for such things. If this be not so, whence comes that great sad crowd, that cloud of witnesses, whose appearance is a silent lament—of helpless girls, with no resource but one, whose existence, such as it is, is enough to make all London wear mourning on every Bank-holiday, if all London had not got something else to think about, and if its right hand knew or cared what its left hand did? There they are, and have been, and will be, 'Breaking the heart of the earth hearing to hear them'—if the earth had a heart to break.

And when our hypothetic girl becomes with favouring fortune an imperial Timandra, driving past Exeter Hall in a victoria, with fur rugs, what does the community

do which calls itself Christian? It imitates her dresses.

Reader, forgive me for railing. You know I did not mean you. You know you do not answer to any of the above descriptions; therefore you will require no apology, except for my tendency to wander from the narrow path of my story. Therefore, now to business.

Rosa we left standing almost under the shade of Westminster Abbey, listening to the great bell booming out the hour, a tolerably late hour, and watching a silent spectral panorama of sorry gaiety file away into the half-darkness of London distances, in spots and flashes, before her eyes. She had left Paris too young to understand all the features of life in great cities to their full extent. Taylor had taken care of that. And now that life, full of the vice of which she had formed so vaguely magnificent an ideal, gathered

chiefly from novels, was before her in its plain reality—in all its vacant ugliness, in all its extravagant beauty, causing strange mixed feelings of ridicule and pathos, also of awe.

A young girl, alone at that hour, in that city, in that place, has a right to feel some foreboding and alarm, even though it be formless and vague. And she asked herself, 'Is that all?—is this what took Alfred from me?—does Mr. Laurence or Jack come here?—do they really like it?'

And these questions, with others, came home to her with such unanswerable force, that her tired-out face grew paler, and she leaned on the railing of Palace Yard for support, half dizzy with fatigue and excitement, and longing for some kind person to tell everything to — some one who would understand without requiring too much explanation, and comfort instead of

blaming—and keep off that black mist that would rise up around her and deafen her even to the great bells above and blind her to the eternal sleepless stars above them.

The stalwart great-coated policeman, slowly tramping by, observed her, and having satisfied himself that she was not a Nihilist about to blow up the palace, remarked :

'Now then, miss ; you can't stay here, you know.'

Rosa shook herself together, and looked at him as no one had ever looked at him before, not even the young lady who handed him surreptitious nourishment through area rails. The policeman was startled, and changed his tone :

'Ain't you well? Can I tell you the way anywhere?'

It occurred to Rosa that she could not tell this man she lived nowhere, and

wanted to go nowhere just then; he might take her to a hospital, or prison, or something equally horrible. You see, her ideas of law, liberty, and the rights of subjects, were vague. So she said the first name that came into her head, the name of the only street in London she knew:

'Tell me the way to Paphos Street, please.'

The policeman told her.

Rosa walked away in the direction indicated. The man in blue watched her with an admiring eye, and formed a false impression of her. Policemen are human after all.

Paphos Street was not very far off. When Rosa got there, she wondered what in the world she came there for: wondered what sort of people lived there; whether doorsteps were comfortable to sit on: people in books slept on them; these were

not bad—why, they were just like being in bed, in Paris, only it was cold—winter, snow everywhere, and Paul Félix was gone to keep sentry out in the deep snow. Why, you could hear the firing now, in the distance.

'Why, who in the world are you?' suddenly asked a surprised but pleasant voice.

Rosa shivered, stretched, looked up rather dazed, and found herself sitting on the stone steps of a porch.

Her questioner was alighting, alone, from a hansom—a fair, pale, pretty girl, a few years older than Rosa, dressed in closely fitting black, in the fashion of the day, though neither loud nor in bad taste. Rosa said:

'I'm awfully tired, that's all.'

'Thought you looked rather seedy, dear. I saw you there, so I made the cab stop to see what it was. Curiosity is a strong

point of mine, as it is of other girls. Can I help you, or direct you anywhere ?'

Rosa stood up, and remarked :

'Thanks ! I've nowhere to be directed to. I wanted to go to Paris, but there was no train. And I want to rest somewhere. I'm rather unwell, I think. I've not had much to eat since I left home—jolly, isn't it ?' and Rosa smiled tremulously.

The other looked at her closely and silently, and exclaimed :

'Good heavens ! You're a lady ! You can't stay out here. Come home with me, and tell me all about it—told you I was curious. I'll give you a rest, and you can help me get through my supper. Look here, I trust you, from the look of you. You may be a pickpocket and shamming, for aught I know to the contrary. Will you trust me ?'

Rosa looked at her :

'Yes. I have no one else to trust, and nothing to lose. But it's really very kind of you.'

'Oh dash it, never mind that! You have more to lose than I have. Jump into the cab. I live a dozen doors further down.'

Rosa, in a state of suppressed, concentrated, shivering excitement, stole quiet glances at her companion as the gas-glare fell on her.

The other was silent too, and looked at Rosa. She was thinking. Thinking why she could have committed this act of gratuitous benevolence. She, who had generally held it more blessed to receive than to give. Thinking, perhaps, too, of a state of life of which this pretty, worn-out, but unsoiled piece of girlhood was the unconscious representative—a state of life which no longer could be hers, under any circumstances whatsoever; and which re-

presented to her a fair and utterly lost past, and plunged her into that very uncomfortable mental condition which consists in picturing vividly to one's self what 'might have been,' had Clotho, Atropos and Lachesis been less capriciously cruel than is their wont.

As Dante discovered in days gone by, there is no sorrow greater than the remembrance of past joy, now no longer existing.

This young lady knew nothing of Dante, but she knew a good deal of this sorrow, and felt it just then, and determined, rightly or wrongly, to defy the three ladies above-named by ordering a pint of Heidsieck as soon as she got home. Home they soon were brought by the hurrying careless hansom.

Of course, Rosa did not look at the number, and followed her guide up a dim stair, and into a dark room, which,

on being illumined by the gas, turned out to be tolerably comfortable, with rather worn, faded green arm-chairs and sofa, and rather soiled antimacassars; a table, on which were heaped old railway novels, a large album of photographs, some playing-cards, two or three comic papers, two or three bracelets, a cigarette or two, and a black fan. On an open piano lay a hat and a long sort of rope of black lace, evidently intended and accustomed to be wound round its owner's neck, some comic songs, and the *opera bouffe* of the day, well worn at the edges. A canary hung, asleep, in a cage inside one of the curtained windows, and a low fire burned in the grate.

'I'm rather untidy, aren't I,' said Rosa's hostess. 'I always was. I never cared much how things looked as long as I could lay my hands on them and was comfortable.'

'That's like me,' said Rosa, laughing a little.

'Here, sit down, child, by the fire, and take your hat off; we'll have some grub in directly.'

And this young person strode out of the room, and Rosa heard her heels tapping on the landing, and her voice call :

'Mrs. Smith !'

'Yes, miss !'

'Bring whatever there is in the house to eat—bread, butter—anything, and a pint of fizz and some tobacco—and bring some coals.'

Then she came into the room again, took off her hat and jacket and threw them on the sofa, knelt in front of the fire and poked it, and unbuttoned her long gloves, rolled them into a ball and sent them to join the rest of her outdoor attire on the couch. She took Rosa's hands in hers.

'How cold your paws are, dear—warm

them ; you look cold all over. Have you come far to-day ?'

'I came up by a night train from ——shire.'

'——shire ? May I ask what station ?'

'Well—Winterdale.'

The eyebrows of her interlocutor went up, and then down in a slight and very pretty scowl at the glowing coals.

'Well—never mind. We'll talk afterwards, when you have refreshed the inner woman. Make yourself nice and warm.'

Here an elderly and eminently respectable-looking female entered with a tray of ham sandwiches, a loaf, some butter, and some jam, and a pint bottle of champagne, and glasses — tumblers, mind you — not champagne glasses. She looked at Rosa cowering over the fire, and opened her eyes and mouth.

'Now I know exactly what you are going to say, Mrs. Smith. You are going

to say, "Well, I'm sure!" Now don't. And as far as I am concerned, never be sure of anything. It's kind of you to have got the ham in sandwiches, knowing that I couldn't carve to save my life. Hope you haven't mustarded them, or I'll throw them at you. This young lady is going to stop here with me just now.'

'Oh, very well, miss!'

And Mrs. Smith went downstairs with her empty tray in a very puzzled frame of mind.

'Now come and eat, dèar, as much as you can—first have some of this.' And she poured out half a tumbler of that very awful, pinkish variety of sparkling wine in which the softer sex so much delight, profanely known among male humanity as 'gooseberry.'

It had a rather good effect on Rosa, however. She brightened up, and fell upon the ham-sandwiches and bread and

butter with a voracity that would have appalled poor Mrs. Frankland, who was just then telegraphing to various quarters of the globe, and taking police inspectors into her confidence, in a state of very natural alarm, at Winterdale. After the meal, they sat in armchairs on either side of the now bright fire, and Rosa's eccentric new friend said :

'You know it's not fair to you to let you come here on a misunderstanding. You ought to know who I am—perhaps you wouldn't eat my bread if you did, though.'

'Whoever you are, you've been kind to me, and I *have* eaten your bread, and your jam too, and I'll smoke one of your cigarettes if you don't mind. Do you see? you're only a girl after all, if you are older than me, and I don't care if you're the devil, and I'm awfully obliged to you, you bet.' And Rosa deliberately got up and

kissed her friend, to the great surprise of the latter, into whose eyes two sudden irrepressible tears came. 'Now tell me,' said Rosa shyly, 'you are—an actress, perhaps?'

'Well, yes.' And she said nothing more about herself; adding, 'How did you learn to make cigarettes?'

'In Paris—I was born there—I'm not English, you know.'

'No; you're not. Few English girls will ever speak to me as you have spoken. I thought you had some sort of accent, too, you know; are you French?'

'No, American; but I learned to speak in French.'

'May I ask your name?'

'Rosa.'

'Ah. Well, I'm Minnie.'

Rosa started; then she reflected that the Minnies of London were probably to be counted by the thousand, and tried to

dismiss the suggestion. But it refused to be dismissed.

'And you have lost somebody, or something, I suppose, that drove you off to London, or Paris, or wherever it is, in this way, without any luggage, or friends, or anything?'

'Yes, I have lost some one, some one I used to trust in, and am going to look for some one else that I trust still.'

'Well, well! Don't tell me more than you want. You have got into some sort of trouble, that's clear; and I think I know there is only one bad sort that you might get into—no, there's another. But you aren't there yet.'

'I don't know why I should not tell you all about it. I want badly to tell somebody.'

And Rosa lay on the hearth-rug and stared into the fire, with sad dark eyes, like those of a lost dog. Then she sud-

denly buried her head in Minnie's lap and cried like a child.

Minnie stroked the back of her curly black head gently, and stooping down with the bend of a graceful snake, mixed her gold ripples with the black ones, and kissed that trembling warm neck as it lay.

Rosa dried her eyes, and keeping her attitude, gave a slight and disjointed, but intelligible description of her state of affairs.

The reader knows them already, and will feel that a reproduction of Rosa's account of them is for many reasons unnecessary. If he has ever heard such a story told in the words of the principal sufferer, he will not wish to hear another, many of them as there are. If he has not, it is to be hoped that he never will. There is something too sadly sacred in the sorrowful story of one girl to another,

whatever it be, to bear to be carried beyond the confessional in which the hearer can hear and understand only through sympathy. Rosa mentioned no names. Minnie only knew that Rosa came from Winterdale, but the key of the story was in her hand, and the last link of it lay in her writing-case, in the form of a note from Alfred de Tortoleone, excusing himself from accompanying her to the theatre on that identical evening.

Repentance and remorse may have traversed Miss Minnie's mind in their most torturing forms, at being thus confronted with the results of her own work (unconscious on her part, it must be urged in her defence); and they may not. All she said was :

'That's rather a go, isn't it?'

And Rosa finished by saying :

'And I found this, and I couldn't help

reading it. I wish I hadn't, and that is why I want to go to Paris, where my best friends are.'

And she put into Minnie's hands her own note. Minnie sat silent for a moment or two, and then muttered, under her breath, 'D—n!'

'Not a ladylike expression that, is it? But then I'm not a lady, you know; I was two or three years ago, though. Was at a fashionable boarding-school, learned a little bad music, a little bad drawing, and a little bad French, and to spell English moderately well, to dress very well, and to know what colours became me, and to use violet powder—now I'm here. After all, I'm worse off in this business than you.'

'*You!* Why, you are not——?'

'Yes, I am. That's just it. And I've only one excuse. That is, that I never knew of your existence, child. And now

I suppose you'll never forgive me—any more than I'll ever forgive Tortoleone.'

Rosa had stood up, and had in her eyes the light of wrath for wrong, and through her lips that were parted for speaking there glanced the small white teeth that had met once, and never more than once, with Tortoleone lips—and had failed to bite them through—a failure since regretted, and she waited and thought.

There was a strange inexplicable sympathy between her and this other girl, from another world, that had irresistibly arisen in the past short hour or two, and even this last cruel trick of Fate could not destroy it. There is supposed to exist between certain men a love unspoken, but otherwise revealed, or perhaps only latent, though known by each, surpassing, as was once well said, the love of man for woman.

This is problematic. But it is surely

just as possible for a spontaneous and irresistible affection to spring up with the beauty of a flower, if not with the unyielding strength of a tree, between woman and woman surpassing the love of man. It would be of a like nature to that which makes rival lovers shake hands on a dead girl's grave. In the case of the woman it would be less rationally, more instinctively founded, and either much less or much more durable. It may exist. Those that know women best will probably be the first to deny its possibility.

However this may be, something made Rosa say:

'Well, you couldn't help it, I suppose, and I couldn't help it. Shake hands.'

Rosa was not of the sort always prone to fly into female arms and embraces, but shaking hands here meant more than that.

'But he *could* help it,' thought Minnie to herself; 'and I'll let him know it.'

Audibly she said, after looking at Rosa with some astonishment in her eyes: 'I say, you were intended to be a man, I think. It was one of those numerous mistakes on the part of Fate to make you a woman. That's the greatest compliment I can pay you.'

'I think I was. I wish I had been one. Never mind, I'll go to Paris to-morrow, and see my old friends and places, and find some one.'

Jack was at this moment uppermost in this child's remarkably versatile little heart, Jack, who was just then chorussing wildly with O'Kelly in the reckless gaiety which despair and wine can alone produce; Jack, who would have given all he had and much more to find Rosa again, and hear her mutter to the mantelshelf, 'What a fool I've been!'—Jack, from whom every hour to-morrow would carry her further away.

Then she and that other slept—after depositing a few tears on the same pillow, the pure and the impure, the wronger and the wronged, together—while the sinless, silent, and callously beautiful starlight shone through the window on both.

Which, after all, was the one that had most reason to complain against the Fates? The one that had had the greatest catastrophe, but the less sense of its magnitude, and who was placidly satisfied as long as 'bread and circuses' lasted, or the one that had the more developed sensitiveness to joy and sorrow?

Both could be pitied! Which one could be blamed?

Who will be the first to cast the stone at poor Minnie? No man, at least.

Who will be the first to cast folly and fickleness in the face of Rosa? No woman who can imagine herself in her circumstances, it is to be hoped.

Who sowed what they reaped?

'Circumstances,' replies the philosopher. 'The Devil,' replies perhaps the man of religion. The flippant man of the world replies that circumstances are the very devil, and so reconciles the disputants.

CHAPTER VI.

'*Benedick:* Well, everyone can master a grief, but he that has it.'—*Much Ado About Nothing.*

The things that a young man at any time, place, or in any circumstances can permit himself to do when in love are practically limitless. The greater his imagination, originality, culture and courage are, the more intensely will he enjoy, and the more deeply will he suffer, and the more wonderful will be the manifestations of both. This was true in the days of the gods and heroes, and is true enough in the later nineteenth century to be almost a truism. Its immediate and present practical proof and example is ex-

hibited in the person of that quaint mixture of Stoic and Epicurean called Jack Miller. While spending one summer day after another in wandering over hill and dale and wood and fern brake, through sunlight and twilight, bewildering or amusing and altogether enchanting Rosa with the strange directness and originality of his thoughts, and the picturesque quaintness of his words, and being himself deeply sunk body and soul in the intoxication of the beauty of her face, and of her young form, and the straightforward candour of the words that clothed her fearless young ideas, he was silent, sometimes even surly, as far as he could be surly, to other people, or sneering at one time and totally nonchalant at another to the persons and things of the ordinary social life around him. In the society of Winterdale he took less interest than ever, and mentally placed himself on a solitary pinnacle of philosophic superi-

ority, to which an approach in confidence could only be made by one girl—Rosa—and one sympathetic man—Laurence.

To his own relations he was of course utterly reticent, and never mentioned Rosa's name. He considered his own relations as amiable and pleasant people, but not capable of understanding and sharing his opinions on such matters. To Max he confided much. Max could understand everything, and was an *enfant du siècle* like himself.

Winterdale at large (or at small) thought Jack conceited and Laurence incomprehensible, and that both were probably possessed of the worst opinions and principles that the latter days have produced.

On the day that Jack returned from Paris he fell from his pinnacle, and the philosopher was submerged in the man. Winterdale, its people and their opinions,

its cathedral and cavalry, became suddenly loathsome instead of indifferent to him; the sunlit splendour of the spring, and the starlight struggling through the thick branches of the fir-trees, and all the pleasant ways that he had walked in became filled with an unutterable sadness. Worse for Jack, because he had not the power of putting it into words, as some men can in such situations, that will ring in the ears of those in like affliction throughout all time.

Worse because the words of such men would ever recur and recur in his poet-ridden soul in all their eternal and cruel significance and reality, as real as any prose about vasomotor nerves, and much more part of human life and love. And for him all the solaces of old ages had departed with their ages. He had no faith to fall back on in his trouble, if indeed that has ever yet comforted any one in such

trouble. He at this moment had brought himself by education and fearless philosophical inquiry into theories of human life, by fearless, unphilosophical, and Faust-like investigations of the eternal realities thereof, to believe nothing, to fear nothing, and to hope nothing. These data being given, what might he be predicted to do on the grounds of social science or inductive logic under the circumstances? I do not know. Nor does Mr. Herbert Spencer, or the Archbishop of Canterbury, with due respect to both.

What he *did* do was to go and get very drunk with O'Kelly, the wild and hairy lyrist, Maximilian the contemplator, of impassive exterior, the confection of Horace, Catullus, Rabelais, and Rochefoucauld, two struggling student painters, and two senseless, sensual, brainless, pretty little consumers of champagne and oysters, styling themselves actresses.

Oh, Rosa, if you and your like could only see, and wholly know, the sex you so often adore in your unreasoning slavish way! If you only knew, mademoiselle the daughter of the Rector, how young Jones, your father's pupil, whom you think a nice young man from college, criticizes horsedealer-wise the 'points' of your person, from eyebrow and fringe to two-inch heel, in confidential beer-begotten conversation with his friend of the 1003rd, in a billiard-room! Even if you did know all this, you might reflect that you are, none of you, after all, so very pure-minded, and exalted mirrors of modest thoughts and gentle words, as some of your chivalrous young admirers, untainted as yet by experience-born cynicism, believe you to be. You know, you of the race of Rosa that read these lines, you know in your secret souls that no girl of you is utterly pure and modest, and suffused with that angelic

undefilement characteristic of the heroine of an antique 'romaunt.'

You know, and we, your victims or victors, as the case may be, also know, that you are often selfish and sensual, and how you talk in your innocent boasting way of us, and our devotion to you, and other little things. Why should not we men do so too? We, like you, have unruly, wonderful soul-and-body sundering passions. We, like you, commit follies and sins, and speak and think of them. That is how we purchase the experience that must be bought. We cannot help it. You cannot help it.

> 'Hätt' Gott uns anders gewollt,
> So hätt' er uns anders gebaut.'

We may shake hands over that, I think: and like each other—as we cannot, unfortunately, avoid—in spite of it, as much as before.

Jack Miller slept in Laurence's room, near the Tottenham Court Road, on this night, and woke up late, feeling strangely uncomfortable, and wondering what horrible thing was going to happen to him, and wishing some one would bring him some iced lemonade.

He had a cold bath, which reinvigorated him a little, and brought into his mind the crowd of experiences and changes he had gone through the day preceding. It occurred to him to look in the glass to see if his hair had turned grey—much. It had not, as a fact, done so at all, though his face looked tired, his complexion strange, and his eyes a little bloodshot.

Laurence was in the sitting-room, preparing tea and anchovy toast. He had also, warned by experience, physiological and practical, purchased a few bottles of soda-water and a few chips of ice.

Having seen Jack consume his share of these dainties, Max, apparently quite unaffected physically by the last night's performance, lit a large pipe, sat down in a comfortable position, and said :

'And now perhaps you will explain, if merely for the sake of satisfying the natural curiosity of one who takes an interest in you, what all this means ?'

'What all what means ?' was the rather sullen evasion.

'Well, you come to London in the middle of the night, apparently without any aim or purpose except to drown something or other in the intoxicating bowl, and to join in several rather silly songs, and to give yourself *Katzenjammer* for the rest of to-day. A man, to do all this, must have a spiritual *Katzenjammer* to start with.'

'Well, I suppose I've got it. Look here. You are no fool in these matters.

What am I to do? Your infernal prophecies have come more or less true.'

'About that little American girl?'

'Even so. She appears to have found the time hanging too heavy on her hands while I was away, and has found for herself another young man.'

'You had better follow her example conversely.'

'Wish I could. But the worst of it is this. *I don't want* to follow her example. I want *her*, and no one else will do as well, and—and I never knew what a d——d formidable business this sort of thing was before. I suppose I'm in love. Wish I'd known it earlier, or not found it out in this sudden way.'

'Which sudden way?'

'I was at her garden-gate last evening——'

'In the moonshine, whistling "Mädele, ruck! ruck! ruck!" I suppose?'

'Go to blazes! Shut up, or I won't tell you anything. I was at the garden-gate, I say, and I saw her in the arms of De Tortoleone.'

'*Sackerment!* Can't compliment her on her second choice. Well, you'll get over it.'

'I should think *you* might have found something newer and truer than that to say.'

'Come now, let us reason together, as some one says somewhere. You are, after all, not much to be pitied. You determined in the most philosophic manner to live in the present, and to gather the roses while you might, irrespective of the consequences. Who is responsible if only bare thorny stems remain in your hand? You clutch like a child at a flame because it is pretty, and then complain of burnt fingers.'

'Pelting me with metaphors to prove

the fault my own does not make me any more comfortable. It tends in the contrary direction. Just assume, will you, that I admit your perfect logical right to say "I told you so" in all the horrible and long-drawn elaborations of which the loathsome phrase is capable, and consider them all said, and proceed to something more comfortable—something prospective rather than retrospective.'

'This experience will be of all the use in the world to your art. You will find after a while that your recollections, that so torture you now, will dilute into something that you will be privately rather proud and fond of, and hug to yourself with the grim satisfaction of that Spartan boy we hear so much of. (I believe that boy was either a posing idiot, like Casabianca, or knew that the fox had had its teeth drawn.) What you had better do now, I think, will be first to remove that

savage beard, which gives you the airs of an age and wisdom you have shown yourself distinctly not to possess. Leave yourself a moustache, turn it up at the ends, perfume it, and go about for awhile taking revenge — running amuck, I may say, among the sex. Then paint some pictures and spend a little time in Paris again, and you will have gone through a very salutary course—a sort of sentimental ferruginous bath, after which you will present yourself before the fickle Rosa (who, by-the-way, is no more to blame than you are, having only acted the principles you preach of grasping at the passing moment and having a good time wherever it is to be had), and see what will happen. Perhaps she will be married. In that case you may give yourself the satisfaction of playing the Don Juan. Getting no mercy, you will find, will make you give none. Perhaps, and much more probably, she will not be

married, and you can compare experiences, and see which is the more consistent young heathen of the two. The result of such a meeting I will not venture to predict.'

'There is no mistaking the consistent heathen in you, anyhow. I think I shall go to Paris soon again. I want to see old Taylor badly. Of course, duty impels me towards my home, to gratify the longing eyes of my relations, etc., etc.; but you know one doesn't feel strikingly sympathetic with one's relations and their topics, and their weather and their church, and their friends and their rector, and their young potatoes and their thousand-and-one other *banalités* at a moment like this.'

'I think you underrate them. Your father is not *banal;* your mother is a kind and gentle lady, and your sister is another, though different; and you can raise the tone of the daily topics to the height of that pure reason and philosophic specula-

tion which are so eminently characteristic of your own daily conversation.'

'Well, hang it, I beg their pardons! I'm not quite on the spot in conversation this morning. Will you come down to Winterdale with me, this afternoon if you like, and bring your latest volume with you?'

'Yes; if you will remove your beard and get yourself up as a civilized member of society.'

Some one was heard battering at the door. Max shouted, 'Come in!' O'Kelly came in, smoking a clay pipe and saying, 'I came to see Miller, and the results of his riot and revel.'

'I'm all right,' said Jack.

'Yes, I know. I see through your case from top to bottom. It is not a new one. I have been driven into delirious dissipation by two or three words from the lips of a girl grown listless before now,

when I was your age. Now I thank rather than blame her. She made my fortune in songs. I don't think there is one in existence now worth disturbing one's mind over. Let them come and go; they all come to the same thing in the end —mere morsels of memory, like scents of old flowers and sounds of old songs and echoes of old fairy tales heard when a child. A friendship of two men or a song will outlive them all. Enjoy it while they are kind and caressing, and go and forget when they are not. "You can't forget," you are going to say? Smoke a pipe and wait till you are older.'

'I suppose you all think I made an awful fool of myself, last night, and all the time,' retorted poor Jack, 'and as you are so infernally penetrating, O'Kelly, and as Laurence knows all about it already, I may as well admit that I share the opinion. I *have* made an awful fool of myself: and

no one is to blame—no one could help it. I shall serve as a frightful example to posterity.'

'And one,' added Max, 'that posterity will fail to follow, if it is wise.'

'One that posterity *will* follow,' said O'Kelly, 'whether it be wise or foolish. Don't you believe in Laurence's cast-iron philosophy, and pure reason, and solemn sense, and passionless flippancy. He has been there too. They have left their marks on him. He may be cast-iron now in soul. It was melted before it was cast. He covers his wounds with jesting as with raiment, as the true soldier in the world's war will. I send my blood and tears out in songs, which is perhaps weaker—but all my strength consists in that weakness.'

'If they heard us now, they might triumph at your confession, O'Kelly,' said Max.

'I think at times I would give all I

could give to see them with us again in our old rooms,' said O'Kelly, 'smoking cigarettes on our sofa, pulling our things about like kittens, putting pipes into your skull's mouth, messing our heads with scents, and going away to leave our souls sodden with sweet odours from their own occasionally intoxicated and always intoxicating little heads. Get some wine, Laurence.'

'Who are "they"?' asked Jack.

'Ghosts gone by with the good old times. I am in love with a ghost still—

> '"Enfant, que ne puis-je en chemin
> Emporter ta mauvaise tête,
> Qui m'a tout embaumé la main!'

Laurence poured out wine. O'Kelly seized a glass, and said:

'We drink to the memory of Them, Laurence, and call upon the ghost of Mimi Pinson to respond.' And he emptied his glass and began to sing:

' " Quand un bon souper la réveille,
Elle fait sortir la chanson
De la bouteille.
Parfois il penche sur l'oreille
Le bonnet de Mimi Pinson !"

Miller, you had yet this experience you have had to go through. It is necessity. You could not expect to escape the net into which the best of fellows have fallen. You will never go through it again. I believe we all win at the last.'

Max was silently smoking. At last he said :

' Why need you reminisce in this cursed way, Kelly ? I never passed such a dismal morning before :

' " Mancher Bild vergess'nen Zeiten,
Steigt hinauf aus seinem Grab "—

To get us all into a sympathetic state of mind. Having now all seen each other to be equal, in the great equality of mis-

fortune, past or present, let us drop a heavy gravestone on it all, and go forth and walk in the sunlight in one of the parks, and then lunch somewhere.'

CHAPTER VII.

'Es treibt dich hin von Ort zu Ort,
Du weisst nicht mal warum.'

HEINE.

ROSA and her friend slept well on into the morning. Miss Minnie was naturally lazy, and always careless as to what hour she arose at, provided her sleep had been sufficient and satisfactory.

On this occasion she got up first, enveloped herself in a long sealskin jacket, trimmed with racoon, by way of a dressing-gown, and procured warm water, after an interview with Mrs. Smith, the landlady, and an interchange of ideas with that

worthy party, on the weather, the rest of the household, and breakfast. The warm water, she told Rosa, was for her, as well as that when she was ready she was to come and take breakfast.

When Rosa was dressed and fully awake, she seemed to herself in a kind of dull bewilderment, feeling no particular grief or joy. Such a feeling, perhaps, a person experiences who, recovering from a blow, has yet to feel the after-ache that will ensue, and has ceased to feel the momentary pang of the stroke. She thought more of the pattern of the washing china, the number of toilet-requisites, littered about, and the size of the looking-glass, than of her own past and future.

When she emerged from the bedroom, there were tea and bread and butter and eggs on the table; and Minnie, in her sealskin dishabille, with her fair hair hang-

ing in a long plaited tail, was kneeling before the fire, making toast, the smell of which was ambrosial to Rosa.

'Oh, there you are. Look out of window and see what a beastly morning it is. You haven't seen the daylight yet, in London.'

'Is that it?' replied Rosa, looking out on that very cheerful atmospheric effect, of which London is at all seasons so prodigal, which consists of deep, tawny opacity, through which the half-buried sounds of traffic came distantly.

'That's the kind of daylight we often have. Haven't you really ever been in town before?'

'No, never. Paris is never like this.'

'I expect Paris is a great deal pleasanter than London, in more ways than one. Now, I've done all the toast. Turn your back on that pea-soup stuff, and come and sit down. So you want to go to Paris?

I don't know much geography, but I suppose the shortest way is Calais and Dover. That's Victoria—the same station you came to yesterday. We'll get a time-table after breakfast, and see.'

Rosa eat and drank steadily, and listened. She noticed that Minnie had not much appetite, and breakfasted mainly on dry toast and a large glass of milk.

'Doctor's orders, my dear,' she remarked. 'Shouldn't wonder if it would do you good, too. You look rather funny round the eyes. It's fatigue and excitement, you know.'

After breakfast Minnie gave Rosa a cigarette, lit one herself, and said:

'Look here, child, just amuse yoursel somehow with these things,' her hand sweepingly indicated the table laden with light literature and comic almanacs; 'or play the piano, if you like, while I go

and find out about the trains and write a letter.'

'I don't know what to say,' said Rosa, 'to thank you for all the trouble you've taken about me.'

'Oh, hang all that! We're not going to begin conversation of that kind, now. I am glad to have your society, as you are not afraid or ashamed to let me have it, and I'll be all the friend to you I can. People don't often profit, though, by having me for a friend.'

And she went out of the room, and was absent for some little time.

Rosa, after smoking restfully for awhile, began to turn over a large photograph album which lay on the table. The majority of the portraits were of men, young men, a few women, and several well-known faces of actresses and professional beauties. Before she had turned over many pages, she gave a little start on seeing a cabinet

photo of the lank features and rather contemptuous expression of — Jack Miller. Her cup was beginning to run over. She was still looking at it when Minnie returned, and observed:

'I've got the time-table. Why, what's the matter? What do you see there, that gives you that face?'

She could not have foreseen this, though she had privily removed a portrait of Tortoleone, full regimentals, in case Rosa might see it.

'Did you know him — much?' asked Rosa, pointing to the photograph.

'Do you know Jack Miller?' was the reply.

'One year or more. Since the spring of 187—.'

'Oh! I haven't seen him since he left Oxbridge! That was before that. I don't know where he has been in the meantime, or where he is now,' said Minnie, em-

phatically adding: 'He's a sight jollier fellow than Tortoleone. Much cleverer, too. Alf can do nothing but dance and wear clothes, *I* think. Jack is, or was, worth fifty of him. What do *you* think?'

'I—' and Rosa broke down, and threw herself on the sofa and sobbed out: 'I've been a real fool, that's so. Jack *is* worth fifty of him—but I never thought so so much till now.'

'Well, you may thank me for teaching you that much, at any rate. Cheer up, darling, and remember that *he*,' pointing to the photograph, 'has never played you any mean trick of this kind. You'll find him in Paris.'

'How do you know he is in Paris?' said Rosa suddenly.

'Don't you be a suspicious baby. Haven't I heard you say you were going to Paris to find—some one? Who else could it be? I've been through all this sort

of thing, and given it up, long ago. The only man I really like is one who has also given it all up long ago, so we get along together. That's O'Kelly, the poet, whom you may have heard of,' said Minnie, rather proudly.

'I think I have. But I don't read English poets, much,' said Rosa, with benevolent falsehood.

'Well, get up and dry your eyes, and I'll show you some, after we've seen about the trains. I wonder if I have any more of your friends in this album. There are several that Jack knew very well. See, that's O'Kelly. Hasn't he got a splendid head of hair? Not the fashion, but it becomes him. I have a piece somewhere, I think'—as if she did not know, and exactly where!—'here, in this book;' and she produced a dark red lock. 'Queer colour, you think, don't you? Well, I like it. He was at Oxbridge, a year or two

senior to Jack, and got sent away for breaking some rules or other. Do you know him?'

'No; but I know *him*,' pointing to another. 'That is Jack's friend, Laurence.'

'By Jove! You *do* know friends of mine. Not that he ever was much, though. He never cared twopence about me. I asked him for his photo, and he gave it, as he would a halfpenny to a beggar, and never even asked for mine in return. Awfully strange coincidence us meeting, isn't it? Almost enough to make us believe in "Affinities," if it wasn't for the awful pity of the whole thing.'

'How did you get to know Jack?—if you don't mind my asking,' added Rosa apologetically.

'Laurence and O'Kelly brought him to supper with us one day, when I was engaged at the ——— Theatre.'

'Were you fond of him?'

'If I don't mind your asking? *Rather*, if you don't mind my saying so,' replied Minnie, smiling. 'You'll ask next, was he fond of me? Well, about as fond as you might be of a pet kitten, or I of that canary.'

'I hate kittens.'

'H'm! Well, I don't hate canaries, or I shouldn't have one. Now we'll look at the time-table. There's a train, you see, here, this afternoon, late. There was one this morning early, but that will hardly do. You can get to Paris in nine hours this way. You'll arrive late at night. Do you know where to go to when you get there?'

'Yes.'

'Then that'll do. And, excuse my asking, have you got any money?'

'Yes. What will it cost?'

'Which class?'

'Oh, second.'

'Between two and three quid—pounds, I mean.'

'Oh yes; I've got that, and a good deal over.'

'Very good. Then look here; when it's time to go, we'll drive in a hansom—you won't have hansoms in Paris, I'll bet—to Victoria, and I'll see you off, perhaps never to see you again. Meantime, we'll spend the day somehow. We'll go for a walk. I won't take you to dine at a restaurant, for several reasons. First, because I don't want you to meet my friends, some of whom would be sure to be at any of the places I go to; secondly, because you can't perhaps afford to waste money in dining in London'—to Minnie economical dining at cheap restaurants was as something unknown and indescribably awful — 'and because you wouldn't, perhaps, like to have me to stand treat. Those are the reasons, in plain vulgar English, for which we will

come back here in the afternoon and make Mrs. Smith give us a nice comfortable feed.'

Here came a ring at the bell. After which, enter Mrs. Smith :

'Gentleman, to know if you're at home, miss.'

'The manager of the theatre,' explained Minnie aside to Rosa, telling the most probable lie she could think of on the spur of the moment ; then aloud :

'Tell him I'm not, then, and out of town for the day.'

Exit Mrs. Smith.

'Now put your things on. The fog's clearing, and we'll go and look at London. You may not see it again for a long time, and you have not seen it at all yet.'

And Minnie retired to her bedroom to put on a dress, while Rosa put on her hat in front of the tarnished gilt mirror over the fire-place. When they were both ready, Minnie, redolent of some prepara-

tion of ambergris and benzoin, such scents as her nature revelled in, said :

'Put some of this on your handkerchief and hair; it's awfully nice, and it won't leave you for a long time. It will be something to remember me by.'

Then Minnie showed Rosa London. London, at least, from her own point of view; consisting of Oxford Street, Regent Street, and the shops therein. They glanced into the Park, but it was too early in the day to see much in the way of fashion and beauty there; and being by then both tired, they went back to Paphos Street, S.W., and dined, after which they talked in a desultory way and played the piano to each other, Rosa playing rather the better of the two. At last it was time for her to go and catch her train. (It had never occurred to her for an instant to hesitate about the absolute necessity of going to Paris.) And the

two set off for Victoria in a hansom, a conveyance new and delightful to Rosa. There was to her an indefinite and mysterious attraction about a great railway terminus, especially when it was growing dusk and the lamps were lit; and the vast dark alleys and recesses into which trains disappeared, and from which they appeared momentarily, were so many varying outlets of escape for anyone who chose to take a seat in a carriage, which from the platform looked cosy and warm and private, with its lamp and cushions. Merely seeing all these surroundings, the 'properties' of the railway company, which went to make up a general effect, would have made her anxious to start on a long journey somewhere, in the absence of any other motive, and she was almost cheered by the hollow melancholy whistles that echoed every moment from the high-arched roofing.

Of course the station was full of people; of course there was the usual careworn, bewildered, but resolute foreign lady, mounting guard over her boxes, a momentary desertion of which to her meant instant robbery, though the thief would have to bring a strong cart on to the platform to remove her valuable *penates;* of course there was a pushing crowd in front of the minute hole through which tickets slowly emerged, accompanied by heaps of copper change, put down with a certain dash, in compact heaps, by an individual of whose existence the only token was a dirty hand; of course there was a passenger with his hat on the back of his head, his overcoat unbuttoned, and his hand-packages strewed on the floor, at his own feet and on those of others, arguing with the clerk, and driving the other competitors for places in the trains mad with impatient despair or wrath.

Minnie got Rosa's ticket for her, and took her to the refreshment-room, and sat her down to a cup of coffee, together with that luxury which railway-bars make it their pride never to be without, a currant-bun, costing one penny sterling. Then Minnie walked out for a moment on to the platform, and noticed a remarkable-looking young man apparently in the act of seeing some friends off in some train. He had just shaken a couple of hands that emerged from a window, and turned to walk back as the train started, when she noticed him. It was none other than O'Kelly.

'Hallo, Minnie? What are you doing here?'

'What are you doing here, Arthur? Haven't seen you for an immense time.'

'Seeing off a couple of friends to the country. I saw you come in just now with a remarkably pretty girl; may one ask——?'

'No, one mayn't. She's not for you. She is going away to Paris this evening. You can come and take coffee with me and her though, if you like,' added Minnie, prompted by a sudden impulse of vanity to show Rosa her distinguished friend.

'Of course I like. Where? in the refreshment-room?'

'Yes.' And Minnie brought him in, and introduced him as 'My friend, O'Kelly, whom I spoke to you of——my friend Rosa.'

'Of whom you have not spoken to me. Quite so. Charmed to meet you,' said O'Kelly, placidly sitting down. 'You are going to Paris?' he continued, to Rosa.

'Yes.'

'Ah. I wish I was, I know it well.'

'So do I,' said Rosa.

'What part, if I may ask?'

'Quartier Latin.'

'Aha! Best country in the world,

isn't it, the Pays Latin. Was, at any rate. What are you going to take, Minnie ?'

'Coffee ; aren't you ?'

'Scarcely. Waiter !'

'Sir.'

'Bring this lady a cup of coffee, and me a small glass of brandy.'

Rosa looked at this man of strange appearance with some curiosity and reverence. He was a public character, she supposed, as everyone seemed to say so, and probably was a real genius. He had very long curly and irregular red hair, and a slight moustache and imperial, a slight figure, and was dressed very like other people. Besides, he was a friend of Jack's, though she dared not say that she was—under present circumstances.

'By Jove !' said Minnie, 'it's time for your train. Come along.'

Rosa was put in a solitary car, and the

conductor cautioned and fee'd to see to her safety and welfare.

O'Kelly said: 'Sorry not to have a longer opportunity of making your acquaintance, Miss Rosa. Greet the Quartier from me.'

'Good-bye, Rosa,' said Minnie. 'Don't altogether forget me.'

'I never shall,' said Rosa. And the train moved off. Minnie went away with O'Kelly and told him the whole story. Then he described the part of it which he knew.

'What a d——d mess it has all been, hasn't it?' said Minnie. 'Fates have mixed things a little, here, haven't they?'

'They always do, if they can. I wonder,' added he meditatively, 'what would have happened if you had come on to the platform a little sooner. I was seeing Jack Miller and Laurence off to

Winterdale. But I could not know all this then. What a very pretty girl this Rosa is. Has she no other name ?'

'Not that I am aware of.'

CHAPTER VIII.

KATZENJAMMER.

What Jack's sufferings were on arriving home, after his remarkable and unfortunate experience of the preceding four-and-twenty hours, the present chronicler had the advantage of hearing from his own lips, or, of course, he would be unable to portray them from hearsay, imagination, or insight into this peculiar and exceptional form of human nature. Jack, in the airy style peculiar to that young man, treated the whole as a sort of feeble joke, in which the feebleness was certainly more conspicuous than the jocularity. He said:

'Of course, to start with, it was my bounden and sacred duty to be overjoyed at getting home—I would rather have been at the North Cape, or across the Styx. I had to converse brilliantly on Paris, and my varied experiences there: to hear all about the latest folly of the Vicar, and the catastrophe which I was really thankful to hear had overtaken the Radford family, in the form of Arthur's degrading alliance, which I think he could not have done better than to contract—he is eminently suited to conduct a respectable public-house —*vide* Dean Swift on the proper conduct of a landlord and landlady. I believe I expressed more satisfaction than was geneally thought seemly. I know I took more wine than I ought after dinner, the first evening I was at home. I know I was irresistibly impelled to go out of doors with a cigar afterwards, from a feeling that I was unfit for ladies' society. I could not,

moreover, face the laughing eyes of that prophesying old fiend Max, so I left him to drink the coffee and do the pretty in the drawing-room, and went myself out for a walk, under that horrid old gang of stars that I used to think so beautiful. Well, so they were still, exactly as beautiful as before, surprising as that may sound, after what they had seen. But I suppose they have seen so much, such millions of years of folly and misfortune, that they are tired of noticing them. Perhaps they were rather excited when the first row came off between a plesiosaur and a pterodactyl, and betted on it. That must have been somewhere near the time when the morning stars were in the habit of singing together for joy. What joy, I'd like to know? Did they ever take to weeping for sorrow? or was that performance exclusively confined to the stars of night, who certainly see most of it, on plain, and pavement, and

sea? Anyhow, they have left off both practices now, and "stehen unbewegliche."'

It will be noticed that there is here a certain amount of wild, rambling, possibly wine-begotten eloquence, not entirely to the point. These speculations on the star-feelings are of an absurd and childish nature, and unsuited to a modern scientific age. To proceed with 'Jack's yarn':

'Of course, like a fool, I felt driven to go in all the old paths I had wandered in with her, and lean on the same gates, where we had remained half-hours at a time, reckless of temperature, watching the moon rise, or something equally instructive; to study the same tree I had sketched with her sitting near or hanging over my shoulder to watch progress, and occasionally supplying me with the refreshing chocolate drop—and, by Jove, my smoking coat, which I left at home, and wore again that evening for the first time, had still a faint reek of her

favourite scent. And when she had a favourite scent, you bet she used it pretty lavishly. Every clot (I can't think of a better word) of her hair was full of it, and yet her hair was always dry and rough. That's why I liked it. And then——'

But these are the ravings of insanity, in which of course neither the present writer nor his sober, critical, and courteous peruser ever indulge. When a young man proceeds to allude to a mouthful of odorous fringe, one feels he is lost in a maze of 'utter' and 'consummate' sensuous dreams, beyond and exceeding the limits of rigid decorum. The 'primrose path' is a very pleasing and excusable, if risky, road, when trodden properly, at a sober and steady pace, with an altar and orange-blossoms at the end as goal; but when passion-flowers are substituted for the humble, pallid, and peaceful, Postlethwaite-beloved primroses, and the pace along the path becomes that

of an intoxicated locomotive, with no rails, and the goal a fiery, misty, and precipitous perspective, the air faint and heavy with ambergris, tobacco, wine, and other unholy things, it becomes an occasion for warning (usually neglected), later for pity (usually rejected), and finally for catastrophe (usually expected).

Young men and young women have no right to bite each other, instead of contenting themselves with the old-established and respectable kiss (preferably, of course, on the forehead). The pace is too good, or too reckless, in this latter-day love-making, to last. 'These violent delights,' etc.

All this, yea, and much more also, did I pour forth to this erring and despondent young man, merely with the effect of extracting from him the unfeeling and bitter repartee :

'Rot! If you knew anything about it,

you wouldn't talk like that. The only satisfaction I have, is in the knowledge that while it lasted I had about as good a time as they make it, and gave passion all its possible and most novel and refined delights and demonstrations. Understand, sir of an earlier and feebler day, that our love was of an unsurpassed, unapproached and wholly modern, or rather wholly ancient, kind. None of your decorous bread-and-butter spooning, where modesty dares not respond to the advances diffidence dares not make.'

I reply humbly, that it is far from me to doubt that his romance was of the latest Grosvenor Gallery hall-marked type. I also, having a great liking for young Miller, with all his strange follies, and a great sorrow for his sorrow, which he so gallantly grins and bears—silently for the most part, except to chosen and intimate friends—I endeavour to soothe the same, by

saying that there are plenty of loves in the world worth loving, and that there is plenty more time to love them in. He says :

'That is about as intelligent a remark as I could have expected from you. Can't you see I care for no future, and that my present is full of the past ?'

> '"Now all good that comes or goes is
> As the smell of last year's roses ;
> As the radiance in our eyes
> Shot from summer's ere he dies."

Excuse my beastly ingratitude for well-meant attempts at consolation, but offering something else I don't want cannot console for the loss of something I do want. I don't blame her—I think she was quite right to seize any opportunity of enjoying her short life that seemed to her good. She merely acted the philosophy I preached. I suppose one of us must have

got tired of it sooner or latter, but that makes it none the less hard lines for the one that gets tired last—or not at all. I never felt like this for any other girl.'

'They never have felt like this for any other girl. They always discover that instructive and curious fact.'

'And I never shall feel like it again.'

'They never do—till the next equally desirable young person turns up.'

'You are a beastly old Diogenes, and never had a passion in your life.'

'Thanks. Take another cigar?'

'Damn your cigars!—I mean thanks awfully. Yes, I'll have another. Tobacco is the best, after all—

> '"More kind than the love we adore is,
> It hurts not the heart nor the brain"—

though the doctors of the old school say it does both. The rest of that day was replete with stunning surprises, and raised

mysteries which it will take time to disentangle. First, I heard that she had disappeared, vanished. Imagine the state I was in. Poor old Hel said, "How extraordinary! You used to take rather an interest in that little American girl, didn't you, Jack?" "Rather!" I replied, in a pacific tone, and walked out of the room. Then came a letter from London, signed by O'Kelly and Minnie, which raised all sorts of fears and hopes, and sent me off to meet old Taylor at the station. He was telegraphed for from Liverpool just as he was going on board his steamer. Awful fluke that it caught him. I went off to the station, in order to have the first word with him before committing myself to any course. The dear old boy arrived chewing and spitting with a grim determination. He shook hands with me silently and hard.

'"I believe I understand what you feel

about the matter," he said, "so you needn't explain. But see here now, do you know anything about it that all these female fools don't?"

'I told him what I knew, as gathered from Minnie's account, and I told him that I proposed buying a hunting-crop in Winterdale and calling on the Tortoleone with it, while he went to see his sister. He said:

'"Don't hurry, young man. Tortoleone's got to stop here, I guess, if he's a soldier?"

'"Yes."

'"Well, leave him to me. If you don't mind, I'd rather deal with him. You see, I occupy a kinder responsible position to Rosa. It would look better if I—understand?"

'"I see. Perhaps you are right."

'Then he thought a moment, and said:

'"Say, now, you go home and keep quiet; smoke some, and cool your blood. I'll go and call on Tortoleone. Then I'll go and fix up Alexandra Frankland, and tell her to hold her tongue, if she can, while I take the business on to my own shoulders. She'll be too glad to give over responsibility to me. Then I'll go to Paris right off and find Rosa —that you may bet on. When I want you I'll telegraph for you. Now, good-bye."

'We shook hands again. What transpired between him and De Tortoleone I know not. I am waiting for his telegram from Paris now.'

So far Jack. He told me this as we were walking up and down in front of the old cathedral of Winterdale, which I had a desire to see once more for associations' sake, I being then on a sort of walking tour, and staying at one of the fine old

Winterdale inns. I asked him to come and dine with me at the inn later. He said he would go home first and look for telegrams. So we parted.

CHAPTER IX.

'O löst mir das Räthsel des Lebens,
Das quälvoll uralte Räthsel . . .
. . . Was bedeutet der Mensch?
Woher ist er gekommen? Wo geht er hin?
Wer wohnt dort oben auf goldenen Sternen?'

Rosa's train moved slowly off, and she looked round her. Outside, darkness and flashing lamps. Inside, solitude and a stagnant-looking oil-flame. This was not cheerful, but it meant advancement and adventure, and tended to bring her nearer Paris. She shrunk into her ulster, and leaned back in a corner of the carriage, thinking of her strange meeting with Minnie, and the still stranger matters that

resulted from it. She had, she felt, utterly trampled out the commencing passion for Alfred de Tortoleone, and recognised that it was a sham and a delusion, begotten of ennui and gold lace, and now she planted all her hopes and joy on reaching the dear old streets whose aspect was so familiar to her, in walking again in the gardens of the Luxembourg, and seeing Dr. Taylor, and Césarine and, naturally, Jack. She felt sure that he was, at least, a man to be depended on, and a help in trouble, if he could be; and she believed that he could be anything he set his will on being. Of course, her estimate of him was scarcely just, but that is natural. 'Anyhow,' she thought, 'he and Taylor will settle something pleasant between them, and Winterdale can be set at defiance.'

She had almost sunk into a sort of delightfully muddled dream of some such scheme of felicity, when the train drew up

at a station, and her ticket was inspected. Soon after, she found herself slowly gliding through a dark seaport town, with lamps and quays and a smell of the sea, and of other less agreeable things, on to a long pier, when the train finally stopped, and the kind old guard came and told her to get out, and saw her to the steps, and told her to follow the crowd. She went through a few dark holes, down slippery wet stone steps, across a gangway, and discovered that she was on the sea—a calm black sea, glittering like ink in the starlight, and covered with lights. In the distance were the lights of the town, and beyond them mysterious shadows that had been white cliffs in the daylight. Above her, high up, was the smoking train, waiting till all its luggage was disgorged to go back to London. And this was her last view of England.

The steamer whistled and moved away,

and Rosa walked up and down the deck. She was thinking of this land she left behind her, and the wonderfully great city, with its fog, and marvellous streets, and above all, Minnie. London to her meant Minnie, and little else but fog; Winterdale meant Jack, and little else but sunsets.

On the sea, in a dark, still, starlight May night, one thinks of many things in a way that one does not in broad daylight, while making coffee for breakfast, or mending the trimming of one's dress. Rosa was puzzling out the world's old tangle of destiny and justice, and failed to see any connection between them.

Here were several cases, her own and Minnie's in particular. Where was the moral to be found in their stories? With what ideas of Divine justice and mercy were they consistent? What was the purpose or plan in the world at all? Why

put people into it with feelings, desires, passions, and impulses like her own, merely to spend their time either in fighting with or in yielding to such?

'I guess there's no purpose, and no right, and no wrong, except what we make for ourselves,' was the conclusion she came to. 'So we'd better have the best time we can, while we can.'

It was natural enough for one in her position, of her nature and bringing-up, to say this. She was only the unconscious echo of what all feeling, seeing, and thinking men, from the author of Ecclesiastes to Catullus, from Catullus to Heine, from Heine to the present day, have said already, from 'Vanitas vanitatum' to

> 'Gestorben ist der Herr-gott oben,
> Unten ist der Teufel todt'—

and from this to the echoing ring of the 'Hymn of Man.'

Rosa's scepticism was founded on feeling and instinct rather than logical and intelligent criticism. The paths were different that led to her conclusions and to Jack Miller's, but the conclusions were in each case the same.

So Rosa walked up and down the deck, enveloped in darkness and an ulster, both of which contributed to protect her solitude from officious offers of assistance from chance young men, delighted to discover a stray pretty girl. When it grew very cold, she went down to the ladies' cabin and slept an hour or so. The other occupants of it were too anxious or too much wrapped in their own plaids and temporary agonies to cast the suspicious glance which is a seldom-lacking characteristic of a travelling English lady when in complete health and self-possession.

When the time came to land at Calais, a frigid and bewildering hour before dawn,

Rosa found herself pushed ashore with the crowd, and landed together with a respectable and large English family into a railway car. She now was more on her native heath, as it were, than in England, and could impose on and assist her fellow-travellers at the same time by her complete possession of the French and English languages. The mother of the party entered into conversation with this strange polyglot girl, apparently for fear that if she did not her husband would, and asked her if she were going to Paris.

Rosa replied that she was.

'Going to school, perhaps? (Aiming at finding out why she was travelling alone.)

'No.'

Rosa added nothing, and the English lady dared not, for politeness, ask 'What then?'

Three or four girls and a young man, all looking abnormally shabby and invalided from the sea-voyage, looked at her curiously. The young man evidently wished to talk to Rosa, but dared not before his mother. He tried to get himself in edgeways into a conversation; but as neither his mother nor Rosa took the least notice of him, he retired and pretended to read Baedeker and to sleep.

At Amiens this party, with the assistance of Rosa, got one of the remarkable breakfasts for which that station is so celebrated, at the usual charge. They were more urbane to her in consequence, and insisted on her sharing part of the very ponderous and pallid-looking galantine which travellers seem fated to buy at the buffets on this line. The girls thawed a little, the mother guessed that Rosa was an American, and therefore likely to speak foreign languages fluently and be

excusably strange in her habits, even to carrying a revolver concealed about her person.

Just before arriving at the Débarcadère du Nord, Rosa offered to see them through the custom-house, which she was allowed to do, while the father and son were doing a chorus of 'I say, look here!' to deaf and imperturbable officials. Having successfully finished this, to the great gratitude of worthy Mr. and Mrs. Smith, Rosa said :

'And now I must go ; good-bye.'

They seized her hands, and shook them warmly, and hoped to see her again, as they got into their cab.

'May I ask your name?—ours is Smith. We are going to the Hôtel St. James.'

Rosa drew herself up to 'stand at ease!' and replied :

'My name is Rosa. I live in the

students' quarter. Ask at the Brasserie Triboulet for Rosa la Rose.'

Mrs. Smith would have fainted in her husband's arms if she had not been occupied in holding her son down by the coat-tails, lest he should start out of the cab and pursue Rosa—to his own destruction, *à la Lorelei.* Mr. Smith would have chuckled, had he not been afraid to do so under the circumstances. The girls' countenances lengthened, and their expressions became Arctic. Rosa burst into a reckless fit of laughter, and hailed a cab with her umbrella. It gave her a real momentary joy to bring up a respectable carriage-load of English Philistines 'all standing' in such wise. It was the commencement of a sort of vendetta for the treatment she had met with in Winterdale. What Rosa gained by giving honest Mrs. Smith the impression that she had been travelling and conversing with, and

under obligations to, 'a person,' for the last six hours, is a mystery deep and unfathomable. But it gave her a pleased, defiant, and triumphant sensation. It was a declaration of war of Rosa's against *Philisterei* all the world over: it was the charge of the Don against the haystacks, or rather of a ship against a cliff, defiantly driving through the dark and the storm against a foe too fatally strong.

It won't do, Rosa. You can't make a hole in your prison wall by running your head against it. The prison was built ere ever you were born, and will be standing years after you are dead. And yet your attempt was heroically absurd, and you are a small soldier in the liberation war of humanity.

Rosa told her *cocher* to drive to the Brasserie Triboulet, Boulevard S. Michel. It was now morning, between eight and nine, a very fine morning, and Rosa felt

that breakfast would be welcome. It is a longish drive, as the reader is probably aware, from the Place Lafayette to the Boulevard S. Michel, and one passes several quarters of distinct character and appearance, from the Faubourg Poissonière, sacred to the memory of Coupeau, Gervaise and Lantier, across the Boulevards des Italiens and des Capucines, known to Mdlles. Nana and Satin, the Place Vendome and Rue de Rivoli, largely frequented by the inhabitants of Great Britain, and over the river with its morning mist, very much as it was on that morning on which Rosa first awoke in Paul Félix's studio armchair under the inquiring glasses of Dr. Ivor Taylor.

Rosa enjoyed it all, and glanced eagerly right and left. Finally the cab drew up at the well-known old brasserie. Rosa paid the man his legitimate fare and *pour-boire,* which she prided herself on remem-

bering, and stepped in. Old Madame Triboulet sat knitting, and stared at this young person in an ulster, who suddenly exclaimed :

'Don't you know me—Rosa ?'

Madame arose, peered at her, and went into a score of exclamations of delight. Having got through the process of welcoming, Rosa asked for Césarine.

'Césarine died more than a year ago.'

'Why was I not told ?'

'M. le Docteur did not consider it necessary. Chitine has come in her place. Chitine is a good girl, and pretty. Here she is.'

Chitine was pretty in a way, and possibly good ; the latter was a matter for speculation. Madame Triboulet explained to her, in many more words than necessary, who Rosa was, on which Chitine expressed herself charmed to make Rosa's acquaintance. Madame then inquired why Rosa had come to Paris, and if she was

alone. Rosa replied by asking for breakfast, and saying she would explain in time. Chitine brought her coffee and bread, which did her immense good, and then Rosa asked Chitine if she knew Dr. Taylor.

'Certainly,' she replied; 'he comes here from time to time.'

'Do you know his address?'

'No. He is no longer at his old address in the Rue de l'École de Médecine. I believe he has gone back to America. He said he was going in a day or two, and that was some days ago now.'

This sent Rosa into utter consternation. What should she do here without him? Her money had been nearly all exhausted in paying for her journey, therefore she could not go back the way she came. Besides, there were many reasons against that, the greatest being the peculiarly compromising position in which she was landed, more by accident than design.

'Did you also know M. Miller, the friend of M. le Docteur?' asked Chitine.

'Yes! Is he here?' replied Rosa eagerly.

'He went to Londres four days ago. He was an agreeable young man,' added Chitine. 'M. Jack, *fort agréable*,' and the expression of Chitine's face was very meaning.

Jack's disappearance served as a last straw to Rosa, who leaned back on her seat and burst into tears of despair. Chitine waited, and asked what was the matter. Rosa said:

'I suppose I'm tired and hysterical. I thought I should find Dr. Taylor here, and I am all alone and have very little money left.'

'Are you sure it was Dr. Taylor you came to find?' asked Chitine knowingly. 'Never mind—*La mère* Triboulet will give you bed and food for a day or two. You

won't cost much, and I can assure you you will not be long in getting money somehow,' she added, with an admiring glance at Rosa's face, and one of critical curiosity at her English ulster. 'While you are here you will find one can amuse one's self—but—there, it's no use telling that to one born in the Quartier.'

Chitine, poor little animal, put Rosa on a perfect equality with herself, morally and intellectually. What she said she meant kindly, and so Rosa took it, not caring or daring to notice or analyse the insinuation conveyed.

Chitine, in her enthusiasm, went off and gave her own account of the whole matter to Madame Triboulet, who said Rosa might share Chitine's bed, *au cinquième*, and that one would see what would happen—by which philosophic announcement she imagined she had settled the matter.

Chitine took Rosa to this lordly apart-

ment forthwith, which certainly had the advantage of a commanding view of hazy reddish house-tops, and much mist. Rosa took off her ulster, withdrew her toilet requisites from its pockets, washed, with Chitine's permission (who stood by inspecting Rosa's personal property and appearance with magpie-like gravity), and laid herself out on the bed, saying she felt very tired and stupid and cross, and would like to sleep for a while. Chitine said :

'Sleep, ma belle, I will wake you for supper, if you do not come of your own accord. I have a bottle of wine here. You will swallow a glass first.'

Rosa took it mechanically, looked gratefully out of those brown irises at Chitine, and swallowed it, turned on her side, and was soon in deep, dreamless sleep.

Chitine went downstairs, thinking to herself, 'She *is* pretty! She will drive

the Quartier mad. She will make *la mère* Triboulet's fortune. She may be the destruction of mine—*voyons!*—I like her almost as if she were a man—curious.'

CHAPTER X.

'From too much love of living,
From hope and fear set free.'

'These stately stars, in their now shining faces,
With sinless Sleep, and Silence, Wisdom's mother,
Witness her wrong. . . .'

And Rosa's sleep grew less sound, and she dreamed she was wandering as of old, in the May moonlight, with Jack, and was talking all sorts of happy nonsense, or being entirely silent, as she often was on such occasions. A very real-seeming and very pleasant dream. Is it for torture or for consolation that dreams of past delight come to us most when such delight is lost?

And then the worst part came—the waking. And Rosa lay still and thought, still full of her dream. She gave up all hope of finding Taylor.

'And, perhaps, after what I have done now, he might not be glad to see me.'

So she lost her faith in her friend whom she had trusted, as well as her hope; and she would soon lose her money. No faith, no hope, no money. These are premisses that often have very serious conclusions.

Jack was in Winterdale—in London—in Kamschatka—impossible to find, or write to. To her Winterdale acquaintances she would rather have starved than write. Such a step involved asking for assistance, accompanied by forgiveness, as well as undergoing all the advice, scolding, wrath and tears, and all the paraphernalia attending upon the return of a prodigal daughter

to a society whose sense of propriety and correctness had been outraged. It meant being held up as an example and warning to all the good, proper and pious, prime and prism pronouncing girls of the neighbourhood. In short, such a proceeding involved repentance, and it was not in the nature of Rosa to repent, more especially when she felt that the wrong was done to to her, not by her.

And all the little philosophy she possessed was overturned by the strong undercurrent of torturing feeling which drove her into wakefulness whenever she verged on sleep, and at last expressed itself in passionate words :

'Oh Jack—Jack—Jack ! why did you ever leave me alone ?'

And the curly black aching little head plunged into the pillow and wetted it with tears.

And then Rosa got up, washed her face,

and went downstairs, and appeared in the brasserie with a strange wild and hungry look in her eyes.

It was evening. Chitine was talking and laughing with a young man, a student, who appeared to be the only occupant of the room. A young man, with a long, sun-burned face, a flexible satirical mouth, decorated with small turned-up moustaches, a thin aquiline nose supporting double eyeglasses, his short light hair trimmed down in the centre of his forehead, brushed back and upwards at the sides of his head. Not an uncommon type in the Quartier, nor in the pages of Parisian caricature, where the young man of gay instincts takes a prominent place.

Chitine, meaning no harm, introduced him to Rosa as 'My friend M. Fredéric Trop-Loisir, Mlle. Rosa.' Chitine thought Rosa was moping for lack of amusement,

and she, Chitine, knew of but one kind of amusement.

M. Frédéric was startled out of his normal *nil-admirari* condition by Rosa's undeniable beauty, and laid himself out to amuse her, but failed to drive away her lost-dog expression. Finally he inquired if she frequently went to Bullier, adding that he supposed not, as he would have without doubt remembered her face had he ever seen her at that admirable institution.

Rosa said not. The student was tolerably struck by the first sight of Rosa, in spite of his *blasé* affectations, and his feelings began to remind him of the almost forgotten fact that he was only two-and-twenty. At the sight of a faint smile of Rosa's mouth he was on fire.

'May I have the pleasure of conducting you to Bullier this very evening?'

'No. I am going out by myself.'

And Rosa put on her hat and left the brasserie. Chitine looked at the student expressively. He nodded, got up, and followed Rosa at a distance.

Rosa went to the Pont St. Michel, and leaned on the parapet, watching the reflection of the pale evening sky, golden green with purple streaks, in the still surface. There was one star, large, bright, and early—Venus—above the strip of dark cloud. It seemed to Rosa that she had seldom seen so beautiful an evening since one year ago in Winterdale, and then it was over a fir-grove that the same luminous and lovely star stood, not over a slow sad river with tall walls and embankments.

Rosa's conscious existence and connection with this world might be said to have begun on that bridge. Should she symmetrically close them there also by a single

sudden jump over the side? The golden-green sky in the water would turn into golden-green rings, and the star reflection would lengthen and quiver and shorten again, and be just as beautiful as ever.

'If there is a God, it can't make much difference to Him if one poor little girl is at the bottom or the top of the water. What difference have I ever made to Him? What did He make me or this water for? I think He must have made me for the water and the water for me. He never was kind to me; He always let me do any silly thing that came into my head. If He made my head, why does it drive me so badly and madly? I can't help things. It is all too much for me. Jack used to say that if there was a hell, he and I might look forward to meeting in it. I don't care if there *is*, and a God too. I'm not afraid of either. I'd rather be with Jack in fire for ever than among a

million angels without him. I'd do something awful that would make them turn me out of heaven right away. I wish the water wasn't cold. It's so pretty. I wonder if it hurts, drowning? After all, I'm only leaving off where I began, Rosa la Rose, fille du Quartier Latin. I have no parents to disgrace, and no future to spoil. I'd like to see Paul again.'

Passions, cruelty, and disappointment had brought Rosa to say, with Cain, 'My punishment is more than I can bear!' The cruelty of the thing was that it was also more than she deserved. 'Necessity' is a phantom — a personification with beams and nails, which unite to form a cross for men and women—a phantom, a mental abstraction. If Necessity, richly deserving the epithets dire and savage, were a real tangible ruler of destinies, attainable by human hand, it would long ago have met with the most speedy, sure and remorse-

less form of death which human brain could devise. But Necessity is not a person, it is not a trinity of Fates, of Nornes; it is Necessity, and that is bad enough. Parodying the zealous watchmen in 'Much Ado About Nothing,' we may say, 'We know this Necessity—a famous thief.'

It is degrading to erect it into a god, as the ancients did, and to worship it. It is equally degrading to rail against it as a demon. The inevitable must be silently accepted. And folly and passion, sin and suffering, appear to be the forms taken by the inevitable in human history. And Rosa was looking intently at the water. A voice behind her said:

'Don't look at that disgusting old river so affectionately. He does not deserve it.'

It was M. Frédéric Trop-Loisir.

'You followed me?' said Rosa.

'I took that liberty. When people of your age and appearance walk away to the Pont St. Michel with such expressions as you had just now, it becomes time to follow them.'

'I don't mind telling you, as you seem to know so much about it, that I want to throw myself in. Will you help me to get on the wall?'

The sound of distant mirthful music waxed and waned through the motionless silent pallor of this warm May evening.

'Listen!' said the young man. 'There is still music, mirth and moonlight left in the world. There is still champagne, tobacco and dancing. They were here before you were born. They will be here after you and I have gone to the nothing out of which we came. The Germans say we pass out of the eternity into the eternity. I say we come from nothing, and go back to it. Is it worth while to go back to it so

soon, while you have yet so much to enjoy? I may be glad enough to ask the assistance of the river or of a pistol myself one day, but it will not be till all the joys of earth are exhausted, or till I am tired of them.'

'I am tired of them.'

'Tired of what you have not half tasted! Bah! Come away from this dismal bridge and discuss the matter on the boulevard. Repent of your decision and come with me to Bullier after, and we will have champagne and cigarettes, and you will bewilder the whole Quartier with your fresh young beauty, like a pleasant dream brought by a breeze of the night.'

'Very well.'

Rosa was no more attracted by this young man than if he had been a poodle or an ape, but she would have gone with the Devil himself anywhere he chose to invite her at that moment. When one has barely decided that life is better than

death, one is not too particular as to the kind of life.

Poor Trop-Loisir imagined he had made a conquest, and a gorgeous dreamy drama passed through his head, of all the adventures Rosa would figure in, in which he, Frédéric Trop-Loisir, student in law, would of course be the hero. He knew women so well, he imagined, and the impression his own incomparable face and intellect must naturally make on any poor girl Semele to whom they appeared in all their sudden splendour for the first time.

People like Chitine adored him, and they were those from whose cases he argued. From the known to the unknown, that is to say, and to the unknowable, a favourite freak of logicians, and one which has brought upon the world many wonderful and fearful fallacies.

Rosa mechanically took the arm he offered, and the two walked down the Boulevard, the young man saluting occasional friends with a knowing smile. The whole Quartier seemed on foot, this fine still evening, walking toward such pleasure as could be got.

The trains jingled by, with their lamps flashing, and with loads of tired employés from the north side, and batches of exhilarated students from the south side of the river. Rosa was excited and frightened. Her skin felt hot, and her body cold, and her escort was annoyed to find that his cleverest nonsense often met with quite *inapropos* answers from her.

He asked at last if she felt at all unwell. She replied:

'Did you ever go out on to the rocks, all slippery with seaweed, on a dark night, when the water flashed like blue flames and little whirling silver snakes, till you

could not help jumping in, and the flames covered your head, and yet you got always colder and colder, while the water moved you gently to and fro, and the seaweeds came up and clung to your neck and arms, and kept you still, and the snakes flickered down and touched you, and you did not know whether it was more like ice or hot iron ?'

The student shuddered, and said that this was certainly beyond his experience.

'Well, that is how I feel now. Can you understand it ?'

'I should say, though I do not pretend to understand medicine, that a few glasses of champagne would put that right. Your nerves are out of order.'

'I see. You don't understand. Never mind. We won't talk about that any more. Perhaps you are right. We will have some champagne, won't we, and cigarettes ?'

'Barrels of champagne, my child, and tons of cigarettes. You talk more like a rational human girl now.'

And they walked on. Poor Rosa! A good many have walked before in the path in which you are treading. The Spectres of Mimi and Musette are before you, leading the way. Will you become one of this latterday crowd, and contribute to the great always swelling chorus ringing from sad mouths, from eternity to eternity, 'breaking the heart of the earth, hearing to hear it?' You are not the first, and as long as earth endures not the last.

Rosa and Trop-Loisir arrived at a large and crowded café near the Observatory, where the adventures of a certain 'Coco' were being chorused with much energy. It was filled with a noisy crowd of men and women, mostly inhabitants of the Quartier, and more or less connected with the University. Here and there might be

a stray Englishman, looking surprised at the forms of amusement he saw, and being stared at by those in his immediate neighbourhood. Rosa leaned on her companion's arm and looked about her. Suddenly she gave a strange little cry, and smiled, and the lost-dog expression went out of her eyes. A sturdy man with a cropped bullet-head, spectacles and iron-grey moustache, came quickly up to her and said, not in French :

'Almighty Jupiter! How are you here?'

'Take me away out of all this, and I will tell you. M. Trop-Loisir, I have found an old friend ; will you excuse me?'

M. Trop-Loisir bowed silently. He supposed Rosa meant to return in about ten minutes, after being treated to a glass of beer. She undeceived him by saying :

'Thank you for bringing me from the bridge here. Good-night.'

Trop-Loisir was momentarily dumb. Some of his student friends, standing round, gave vent to an irritating titter, which served as a stimulus to him, so he adjusted his eye-glasses, turned up his small moustache, walked up to the sturdy man in spectacles, and said :

'Sir, will you condescend to explain this ?'

'Certainly. I am going to take charge of this young lady for the rest of the evening. I don't think she is likely to profit by your society.'

The students crowded round, and waited to see the dingy foreigner crushed.

'Sir, you insult me !'

Grey moustache spat leisurely on the floor, ejecting tobacco-juice with the precision of a rifleman from the left corner of his mouth, and remarked :

'All right, don't hurt yourself—keep your hair on !'

'You are an American.'

'I am so; and you are a Frenchman, and a conceited one by the look of you. Got any more to say?'

'Do you refuse to fight?'

'Have not been asked yet. Just now I am going to take this young lady out of here, and you are wasting my time with your blasted chatter.'

'Will you choose your own weapons?' exclaimed Trop-Loisir, foaming at the mouth at the cool way in which he was being treated, almost played with, by his adversary, 'or restore the lady to my arm?'

'Looks as if she wanted to go back to your arm, don't it? Now listen, young man. I seldom fight; but when I do, I do it with these things' (and his right hand wandered instinctively under the tail of his coat); 'you understand? at sight. If you like to call at my apart-

ments with a revolver, I shall be happy to illustrate, and we shall have no one to interrupt. My name is Taylor, and I am at 22, Rue de la Harpe. Just now, you will either make way or I will make way for myself.' The hand again wandered under the coat-tail.

'Que ces Américains sont de barbares!' remarked Trop-Loisir.

But he made way. Taylor called a cab.

'Now, Rosa,' said he, when they were seated inside, 'tell all about it.—And you bet she did!' he remarked subsequently.

After her long confession and cross-examination, he said:

'I guess there's balm in Gilead still left. By Gilead I wish to be understood to mean Winterdale; by balm, I mean—— Say, would you like to see Jack Miller?'

Rosa startled and brightened visibly.

'Yes.'

'There is much expression in that monosyllable: I see there is balm in Gilead. Well, it's going to be forwarded per cars from Gilead to Paris. Now I fancy we'll go and have supper. Where would you like to have it? One of those places over the river?—Brébant?—Café de Paris? Where you like, Rosie.'

'I should like to have it at the Brasserie Triboulet. It may be the last time.'

'Well, you shall.' And he gave the order to the driver.

CHAPTER XI.

CLOUDS LIFTING.

I ORDERED such a dinner as I thought would be satisfying to the soul of Jack Miller, and sat down in the window-seat of my room at the old Winterdale inn, and leaned out at the open window smoking and watching the fine May evening come on, and glancing down at the people in the street and at the inn-gate. Jack was a little late; and when he did appear, it was with a carpet-bag and in the company of a soldier, a hussar, with whom he appeared to be in deep conversation, whose hand he shook heartily as they parted below at

the door. Jack rushed upstairs, threw his bag into a corner, and came and stared out of window with me.

'Awfully sorry to be late, old fellow; but I've had to pack up, and I met O'Hara, De Tortoleone's servant, who it seems witnessed what Taylor would call a "difficulty" between the latter and his master, and I wanted to know all about it. O'Hara I met in the train the other day, and——'

Here I hint that, having been on the tramp all day sketching, I should not be sorry to dine and hear the story of O'Hara in the course of that meal. Miller sees it in my light; and we sit down, with the May sunset shining in, over the roofs, at the window, with the cathedral tower across it, a square black block against a yellow blaze of light and streaky clouds. Jack tells me all about O'Hara and the railway journey (of which we have

already heard) over the soup. It appears, further, that De Tortoleone makes himself unpopular with the said O'Hara and others by bullying and abusive language, which, when used by one of superior to one of inferior rank, whom discipline prevents from retaliation, is simply cowardly. It also appears that said O'Hara takes, in consequence, a peculiar pleasure in telling the details of a certain stranger's visit to De Tortoleone, and consequent exciting interview which took place, partially in his (O'Hara's) presence. Jack Miller is entertained and pleased by the narrative of said O'Hara, and enforces on him the acceptance (without much difficulty) of potations in the bar below at his (Jack's) expense. Hence the delay. Jack Miller is also elated at having received a telegram from Taylor in Paris, saying, 'Come right off; both want to see you.' He is going to start

to-night, and will not stay to smoke in my comfortable bow-window after dinner, and gaze at the waning evening, but insists on my walking with him to the station, which means helping to carry his carpet-bag. I hate walking quickly to a station up a hill after dinner with a bag; particularly when it is some one else's bag. However, young Miller is finally got rid of, and I return to find Corporal O'Hara still in the bar-room, highly elated, and making florid Irish love to the young lady who supplies him with Kinahan's LL.

It will now be perhaps interesting to describe what really did happen in the interview between Taylor and the young lieutenant of Hussars, O'Hara's account being subject, like the electric declination, to diurnal variations, and generally resembling the story of the fight between Christian and Apollyon—the *rôle* of the

latter being taken by Alfred de Tortoleone.

Dr. Taylor inquired his way to the cavalry barracks; on arriving there, to De Tortoleone's quarters; on finding O'Hara loitering near them, burnishing nothing particular with great diligence, he inquired for the lieutenant. O'Hara rose to attention, and said he was at home. Taylor gave his card — a large acre of a card, of evident foreign growth, which O'Hara conveyed to the inner room. Taylor followed it. De Tortoleone was sprawling on two chairs, smoking cigars and consuming brandy-and-soda, and reading the *Sporting Times*. He rose and said:

'Ah, you are Dr. Taylor! Glad to meet you; sit down. You are come to talk of this mysterious disappearance, I suppose. Have a drink?'

'No thank you, sir; I guess I won't

just now. I have come to talk of that disappearance.'

Taylor had a queer expression. The other wondered how much he knew and how much he did not know. He tried an audacious manœuvre. He took an envelope that lay on the table, tossed it over to Taylor, who was sitting opposite, saying:

'Can you give me any idea what this means?—it may be a clue to her whereabouts. I never saw the handwriting in my life.'

Taylor looked at it: it was from Minnie. He knew the writing, having seen the former letter to De Tortoleone and the one to Jack Miller, inclosing and explaining, which she and O'Kelly had concocted.

'May I read this?'

'Certainly. If you can gather the vaguest idea of what information it is

intended to give, you are sharper than I am.'

It contained a photograph of De Tortoleone himself, torn in two, and a sheet of paper on which was written, 'Show this to Rosa.—MINNIE.' Taylor looked at his victim.

'You don't know who this Minnie is?'

'Not the least. Post-mark, "S.W.;" very wide address, you see!'

'You have no reason to suppose the young lady in question, my adopted daughter, to have any knowledge of this Minnie?'

'Good heavens—no! Now look here, Dr. Taylor. You have come here to find some proof of some imaginary foul play of mine in connection with Rosa—with Miss Taylor. What it may be, I have no idea. Some one has, perhaps, been kind enough to inform you. I have the greatest regard for your daughter; and a man of the

world like yourself would be above the folly of raking up old stories of peccadilloes of my bachelor's life. I don't pretend to have been moral, nor you either, I suppose, but—nous avons changé tout cela. When I wished to become engaged to Miss Taylor, I of course dropped all that sort of thing. I don't mind honestly telling you that I never was a saint; but I suppose you understand all that, and will take it as meant.'

Taylor 'fixed' De Tortoleone with his honest brown eyes and spectacles, and remarked in his usual calm drawl:

'Now, see here, young man. I admire the manly straight-forwardness of your speech' (the other looked pleased), 'the candour of your uninvited confessions. You should remember, however, that you've got a Yankee to deal with, who ain't such a d——d fool as to come here for nothing and have his wounds plastered

up with a few fair words. You played a very bold card, young man, when you showed me that letter; you played a bolder when you said you didn't know the handwriting.'

'What do you mean, sir?' said the other angrily.

'Keep your shirt on. You'll hear what I mean. As you hint, I was never a moral man; I hope I never shall be. But I never was mean, not that I ever heard of, and I hope I never shall be. You are mean. You know that handwriting well. It is from a woman whose hand I'd like to shake far sooner than yours. There are a few other letters from her to various people I've seen. There is the letter you lost the other day, for example.'

De Tortoleone started and looked pale with rage.

'I came here to ask you to fight a duel.'

'Very good, sir, I am ready.'

'But I don't think a man that lies like you ought to be fought with, or wear a soldier's clothes either. If you were in our country I should simply shoot you as you stand there' (and Taylor fingered a navy revolver which had emerged from its customary lair in the back parts of his person), 'but you ain't worth runnin' the risk of being hung for.'

De Tortoleone made a move towards the fireplace and looked uncomfortable. Fighting a duel at thirty paces, with a weapon in your hand, in the future, is better than standing unarmed at the distance of four feet from a revolver in the present.

'Now don't get fingering that bell-handle, young man, or I'll maybe change my mind, and run the risk of being hung. On second thoughts I'll ring the bell myself.'

O'Hara appeared.

'May I ask your name?'

'O'Hara, sir,' saluting.

'Well, then, see here, O'Hara, I don't know your rank, so you'll excuse my calling you plain O'Hara. I hope you may be a Brigadier-General some day. I want you to see fair play here, and be able to correct any false stories that may get about. This man, Alfred de Tortoleone, is rather clever at stories, as I have been explaining to him.'

O'Hara stood bolt upright and silent, but a certain gleam was in his eyes. He had the Celtic scent of a row in the distance, and was not sorry to hear his superior officer 'slated' by a powerful-looking stranger.

'This man,' went on Taylor, 'has told me lies this morning, which I can easily prove to be such. He has behaved like a mean skunk to a young lady, and—would

you mind staying where you are, Colonel O'Hara?'

In the 'scene that ensued we will not take a hand.' Suffice it to say that at the end of it De Tortoleone had come off second best—very much so—and that his best riding-whip lay in pieces on the floor. Taylor departed with a 'smile that was child-like and bland.' O'Hara had remained in motionless delight the whole time. When De Tortoleone growled, 'Go to h—ll! What are you standing about like an idiot for?' he saluted, and withdrew grinning.

Very soon the story became public property. O'Hara found the sturdy American at the bar in the railway-station a few hours later. He grinned, saluted, and said:

'God bless ye, sir, and good luck go wid ye!'

'Bully for you! Have a drink?'

O'Hara had a drink. After a short interview, Taylor left the bar and started in the train for Paris. When he arrived there, he went straight to the Maison Triboulet and cross-examined Chitine. This sent him off to the Chalet. What he did there we know. He subsequently met M. Frédéric Trop-Loisir, to whom he apologized for his violent phrases, since he had been informed that he (Trop-Loisir) had practically saved Rosa from suicide. He then told him sufficient of Rosa's history to make the student swear an eternal friendship and invite him to a café.

'Will I have a drink? Why, certainly.'

Almost all Dr. Taylor's conversations began or ended by 'having a drink.'

Meanwhile Jack was hastening by sea,

'steam and speed,' to the scene of so much of the woe and joy of the world, and of Rosa in particular, the great old city south of the Seine.

CHAPTER XII.

'Du immer geliebte,
Du längst verlorene,
Du endlich gefundene!'

And Jack Miller started for Paris with his mind full of wonder as to what could happen when he got there. He felt himself to be in a curious state of exaltation, confidence, and hope, a great pyramid of anticipation balancing on its apex. And the apex consisted of a few words in a telegram: 'We both want to see you.'

But he knew two things which comforted him. He knew that he could never again go through such a sundering soul-conflict

of passion as that of the last few days, however soon his pyramid might overturn. And he knew that when Taylor wrote that telegram he meant something by every word.

People do not generally waste money on phrases at so much a word. But Taylor did not habitually waste words in phrases when they cost him nothing.

Therefore Jack stepped on board the steamer at Dover with a tendency to light-heartedness. He assisted suffering ladies, he joked with a sailor and offered him tobacco. He remarked what a splendid night it was to a pale passenger, who querulously retorted that it was a beastly night. This made Jack laugh, when he got by himself. He felt talkative, and hung round the second class bar with a tall American, with long cigars and a pronounced and enduring thirst.

In the morning he was in Paris.

Dr. Taylor and Rosa were at the terminus. All three had a jovial little breakfast at a small restaurant in the neighbourhood, at which not a word was said by anyone of the past or future. A sort of gay excitement lay on Jack, a sort of shy satisfaction on Rosa, and a sort of grim tenderness on the bronzed and square-cut features of the American.

'Let us pretend,' said Jack, after breakfast and cigarettes had been fully dealt with, 'that we are strangers, tourists, or something equally debased, and go and see Paris. A little tour will do us good and arrange our ideas.'

'I'm in,' said Taylor.

'Let us take a carriage and drive round the world by the hour. No. We will drive to Notre Dame, and ponder on the passage of centuries there, and think on

Quasimodo and Esmeralda, and then we will walk. Will you come, Rosa?'

'Yes.' And they hailed the nearest open carriage, and drove off laughing and chattering. What a different drive from Rosa's last through Paris, a day or so ago!

And they were dropped at Notre Dame, the heart of the city, on that strangely picturesque island of architecture, like a ship, with its bows pointing westward. They strolled about the paved floor of this grand old Gothic cathedral, the monument of the might of the men who made it out of their fantastic faith, marvellous fancy, and real art. What makes these buildings what they are, and gives us the impression that they are no longer to be produced, only to be imitated, is the fact that the heart and love and faith of their makers was in the work, their fancy free. And no modern workmen will ever have

their heart and love and faith in such a work again.

You might as well ask the House of Lords to join in a Crusade against the Paynim. You would look a long time before you found the chivalric class of Europe. And when you found them, they would be divided as to whether the 'Paynim' was or was not necessary to their own interests.

Gothic cathedrals were produced in the days when gods and kings had their rights recognised. Workmen were not in the habit of striking much, then. Masters were. It was impossible to ask for a rise of wages when you had none to raise, but were fed and clothed perhaps, or left to feed and clothe yourself perhaps, according to the amicability of the noble owner of your villeinous person.

No one ventured to dispute the rights of religion, or the eternal fitness of things

as described by the books and oracles of a Christian Church. A few maniacs in Italy, England and elsewhere, did so. They were burned amid wooden faggots, resinous pitch, and the fumes of sulphurous acid (popularly known in those days as a 'smell of brimstone').

No one ventured to dispute the inspired origin of the feudal system, or the fact that it was a 'boon and a blessing to men' (like certain pens of the present steel age). If they did, their backbones were divided between the atlas and the axis by a smart blow of the ordinary axe, which usually severed the cervical muscles, and vessels, and the windpipe and œsophagus as well. People came to see this process, and struggled for front places, and liked it. They never betray such debased tastes now.

But these were the good old times. What a pity they can never return again!

And yet they produced Notre Dame.

And Raffaele.

And Dante.

But they also produced Rabelais.

And Luther.

And Giordano Bruno and Servetus.

For one great cathedral and genius that those times produced, those ages of chivalry, they slew and tortured ten great men. When a genius grew up among them, they found him out, aye, quicker than we do, whose streets amd picture-shows swarm with geniuses. But they made him regret that he ever was fool enough to be a genius, or, being one, to let anyone else into the secret.

A chorus, far off and dim in the distance of asphodel and amaranthine atmospheres, is audible, composed of the voices of those who have suffered in their lives for being geniuses—men of colossal soul, far beyond all archangels and arch-fiends. They all

affirm the truth of the above remarks with a faint Elysian 'Hear, hear!' Dante is at the head, Villon at the tail thereof.

Rosa suggested that they should go to the Pont St. Michel.

'I want to show you something there, Jack.'

'Very good. Paddle on, all.'

And they strolled along the sunlit quay, whose low, flat-topped walls were laden with portable bookstalls, displaying their dingy and quaint-looking wares, and watched the small steamers hurrying up and down the river, and the tall, damp-looking buildings on the opposite side. When they reached the middle of the Pont St. Michel, Rosa called a halt.

'You see this place, here, under this lamp-post?'

'Yes,' replied Jack.

'That is where I was found, eighteen years ago, by Paul Félix. This afternoon

we will go and see his grave. By that same lamp-post I stood a night or two ago, thinking how pretty the reflection of the stars in the water was, and a few other things.'

'Well, here we are again,' was Jack's expressive, if pantomimic reply.

He was not thinking like that, but he could not just then say exactly what he was thinking.

'There—I'm glad you've seen it. Now let's go away—where shall we go?'

'Suppose we go up to the dome of the Pantheon. Paris will look beautiful on a morning like this. Have you ever been up?'

'No; come on.'

And they walked up the shady old Rue St. Jacques, up the Mont St. Géneviève, the heart and citadel of the Quartier Latin, till they came to the imposing structure dedicated by the Revolution to

enshrine the remains of the great men of France. They did not care to visit the tombs of the said great men. That was not good enough, said Jack. They elected to make the ascension.

Dr. Taylor, with a certain curious look at the two, said he could not be bothered to go up where he had been so often before, but would wait under the awning of a café near the École de Droit, close by.

'How different it is to Notre Dame!' observed Rosa.

'Naturally.'

'I like Notre Dame much better.'

'People generally do, I believe.'

It was curious how commonplace and restrained the conversation had got since Taylor had left them. That is the way *tête-à-têtes* are taken advantage of.

* * * * *

'Are the stairs usually as dirty as this?'

'Invariably. People would not be comfortable here if it were not the case, and if there were no bad smells.'

* * * * *

'Oh!'

This intelligent observation was elicited from Rosa, as it has been from several other persons, by the balcony view of Paris—Paris, with its Quarters of different complexions, grey, pink, red and dingy, low hills and valleys, in the bright morning sunlight, tempered with floating smoke and the mists of aërial perspective. The Arc de l'Étoile stood up, with its feet planted firm and wide apart, amid a crowd of housetops, like a giant among pigmies. And yet those housetops were no mean height.

Napoleon stood on his column far away on the other side of the river, gazing into space. Incredible as it may sound, at that distance Napoleon looked insignificant.

Close at hand seemed the two towers of St. Sulpice. The roofs below looked black and extraordinarily foreshortened.

Rosa stood still, leaning on the balustrade, and gazed and thought. Contemplation of such a wonderful, beautiful, and still scene usually has the effect of making people think, even those who think seldom. But Rosa thought often.

Then Rosa looked at Jack, and spoke :

'I suppose you've heard all about me ?'

'More or less.'

'Well, what do you think of me ?'

'I don't blame you at all.'

'Really ? Everyone else does, I expect.'

'I don't :—

'"A tous les sots coquets n'ayons donc mal égard."'

'That's what I've always thought.'

'Rosa.'

'Yes, Jack.'

'Will you come back to me?'

'Yes, Jack.'

* * * * *

'I don't deserve to be asked to come back.'

'Listen, darling, and I will tell you a story—a favourite story of mine, by a German poet. He was sailing over the still seas in the neighbourhood of Holland, and imagined that he saw an old mediæval buried city below the water, with churches and towers and streets, and thoughtful men in dark mantles, with white ruffs and gold chains, long swords and long faces, ascending the steps of the town-hall and walking over the market-place. And along the old streets, with their quaintly cut trees, his eyes fell on an old house with high gables, that seemed sad and empty.

'"Only," he says, "there sits at the ower window a girl, leaning her head on her hand, like a poor forgotten child. And

I know you, you poor lost little one! So deep, even as deep as the sea, you have hidden yourself from me in a child's whim, and could not find the way up again, and stayed, a stranger among strange people, it seems centuries long.

'"While I, my soul full of sorrow, sought you, and sought you always through the whole earth, you whom I loved always, you whom I lost so long, you whom I have at last found.

'"I have found you, and look again into your sweet face and your clear true eyes and lovely smile. But never will I let you go again."'

* * * * *

'And now, I think we might go down,' said Rosa.

'What are we to do when we get down?'

'I thought you were to devise our amusement.'

'My inventive faculties have succumbed. I feel drunk. I feel inclined to make absurd puns, or to sing a comic song. Too much something or other has made me mad. Let's consult Taylor.'

* * * * *

The three strolled through the gardens and galleries of the Luxembourg. Dr. Taylor frequently lagged behind, or wandered on in front of them. He realized the situation perfectly, and was present when necessary, and was perfectly jovial and commonplace, and betrayed no consciousness of anything extraordinary. He certainly never thought of letting anyone know that he loved Rosa himself, with all the hopeless, helpless might of his mature manhood. Not he. He led her to suppose that he was simply the same as ever—her old Yankee guardian, Dr. Ivor Taylor, with a tendency to chew tobacco in public places, to make grim jokes, and drink

vermouth. And he thought to himself:

'He's a good feller, is young Miller. No fear and no humbug about him. Guess Rosa's done better that way.'

And he walked over and joined them, as they stood under the well-known picture of Truth.

CHAPTER XIII.

'Rumoresque senum severiorum
Omnes unius æstimemus assis.'

Catullus.

Dr. Miller and Dr. MacSwiney were sitting round glasses of whisky one wet afternoon, discussing the habits of primitive man, as well as those of their neighbours to some extent, in the Professor's own den. Mrs. Miller and Hel were gone to a concert in Winterdale, and Max Laurence was escorting them. Jack was presumably in Paris. Therefore the Professor had every *à priori* probability in favour of an undisturbed afternoon for himself and crony.

The Professor did not frequently take whisky in the daytime—only when Dr. MacSwiney's duties allowed him time to call, and leave the neighbourhood for about four hours to the uninterrupted enjoyment of their health and diseases.

Just now, however, both these luminaries of science and the art of healing were in sublime Olympian disarray of old clothes, and hoped to spend a cheerful rainy afternoon, with the aid of old pipes, old whisky, old stories, and new comments. The Professor's bony and angular limbs were twisted over one another in his leather arm-chair, his elbow rested on his table, covered with periodicals, MSS., and bones, his hand holding the favourite long German pipe. His nearly white hair was ruffled and long, and his eyes glittered with intelligence and whisky, and his kindly shrewd old visage looked kindlier and shrewder than usual.

Dr. MacSwiney's face shone. His short

and ponderous legs stretched straight in front of him before the fire, his arms were folded, and an old brier pipe, perfectly black, and bruised by frequent knocking on the bars of grates, stuck straight out at the corner of his mouth.

Surely it were a crime to disturb two human beings so happy!

'A more phenomenal product of civilization than the modern son,' remarked Professor Miller, 'I have never known. He beats the Roman father to nothing. He is not the prodigal of the Scriptures, because he doesn't like swine's husks. He goes in for gastronomy, and is fastidious. He studies art, especially that of instruction in sucking eggs to those whose age ought to be guarantee enough of their ability to dispense with such teaching. He does not sow wild oats in the reckless, uproarious, knocker-snatching, Charlie-capsizing style of our day. He thinks that vulgar.

Perhaps he is right. But the new patent brass-mounted oats which he *does* sow are such as would make our barbaric ancestors open their eyes.'

'I come across swarms of them in my practice,' said the other *medicus;* 'not, of course, here in particular, but through my life from time to time I am called on by the youth of the period. They betray, on cross-examination, the most unabashed matter-of-fact familiarity with forms of what we used to be told was vice, which one would suppose had died out with those very remarkable people, the Greeks and Romans. I don't suppose it's called vice now. A name has probably been invented to suit the times. I take it very easy. I know that most men are either foolish or vicious, or both. Nobody knows that better than a doctor. Breathe it not in Gath, but I prefer the vicious to the foolish. There is something decidedly unattractive about a

person who possesses all the virtues, whereas there is something distinctly interesting about one, the rigidity of whose existence is toned down by a "redeeming" vice. Besides, there is the feeling of material gratitude I owe to vice for providing me and my confraternity with a certain large fraction of our incomes.'

'You might include the journalist and the preacher. Without vice their occupation would be almost gone. Don't you think that half the railing of old fogies like us—like me, I mean, I beg your pardon—on the young men of the day is founded on envy? We see them enjoying a better or a more elaborate education than was usual in our time, and enjoying such good things as this world offers them in this their *Sturm und Drang* period—things that are as fallen leaves and snows of last year to us. We don't like to be told half our ideas are out of date,

especially when we have a lurking consciousness that it is true hidden under our indignant denial.'

'I don't envy 'em a bit. I take what the gods give, and am happy. As long as I can read my Horace (Bible, I say when I'm talking to lady patients), and smoke my pipe, and take a little good old Irish whisky sometimes, the young men of the day are at liberty to go to the devil, with all the new or old methods of acceleration in that direction which their erudition or ingenuity may devise.'

'Now, my boy Jack,' said the Professor, 'is a good fellow enough; but he is so infernally mysterious and independent in his goings on, that I have the most hazy ideas as to what he is up to just now, except a general conviction that no lad would take so much trouble and make so much trouble unless there were a pretty girl somewhere in the plot. What has set

me talking about this is, that I have had to entertain a sort of mothers' meeting here of all the old runts in the place, who all had different complaints, warnings, and accusations to make about that lazy Jack and the very pretty young American lady who has recently disappeared. My worthy sister-in-law first of all complains that my son vindictively sent an armed foreign assassin with intent to wilfully massacre and maliciously kill and slay her son. I reply that I know nothing about it, that her son is a soldier, and had better make his own complaint to the principal person concerned. She hereupon sulks and weeps on the lid of the grand piano.

'Then Mrs. Radford wishes to announce something very awful, bnt indistinct, about the character of the young lady whom she asserts my son has eloped with. She also in some mysterious way makes out that my son and Miss Rosa Taylor have brought

about the recent lamentable *mésalliance* of her distinguished son Arthur. I point out to her that my son did not elope with anybody, but came home by himself, and heard for the first time from my lips of Miss Taylor's disappearance. I further add that nothing but a slightly over-rigid upbringing and a rather material disposition are responsible for Arthur's so-called mishap, and happily succeed in offending her and reducing her to silence. Then I have to prevent a sort of free fight between the Marquise and Mrs. Frankland, the latter complaining of some ill-conduct of the son of the former to Miss Taylor. I can imagine that there is really something in that. Mrs. Frankland is more quiet and consistent in her statements, and does not betray quite so much heat as the others. In the middle of it all, poor Exeter ambles in, and may be counted as another old woman. He "grieves to hear" very sad

rumours about something or other, and insinuates that he "always said so." I got rid of the whole crowd by promising to inquire into the matter. Now, in your "candid opinion," what the devil does it all mean? I have my own ideas, but you probably know more facts than I do.'

'It means that Miss Taylor is a very pretty girl, and for that crime, as well as for the unfortunate habit of having undisguised and independent opinions, she has become obnoxious to all the old catamarans and young kittens in this neighbourhood. It means that she has been grievously insulted by a weak-minded young blackguard, who is, I regret to say, your nephew, and that the latter has been, not assassinated, but very effectively and deservedly horsewhipped, to the delight of the male portion of Winterdale, soldiers included, by one who had a perfect right to do it. I should like to have done it.

That man is an honour to our profession. Here's his health.'

'Which man?'

'Dr. Ivor Taylor!' announced Jean, the old Scotch housekeeper. And that worthy, followed by Mr. Jack Miller, the subject of so much controversy, entered.

'Proud to know you, sir! I have heard much of you, as well from your son as from the scientific literature of Europe.'

'Sit down do, Taylor. Let me introduce Dr. MacSwiney, from Dublin. Jack, make yourself at home. I dare say you two can throw some light on the mysterious rumours which are exciting Winterdale. But first of all—— Jean!'

'Yes, sir.'

'Bring two more tumblers. You'll join us in whisky, Dr. Taylor?'

'Why, certainly.'

'And I know Jack will.'

'Well, young Miller,' said MacSwiney, 'has the errant damsel returned?'

'The errant damsel is just now with Mrs. Frankland, explaining, I suppose, whatever she thinks proper to explain. I am glad to have found you two alone. I don't know any three people more likely to get on together better than my father and yourself and Dr. Taylor, whom I can only describe to you as one of the best friends I have.'

'Let us hear about that assault on young De Tortoleone,' said the Irish doctor, 'There are few things I can remember that have occasioned such general satisfaction here—saving your presence, Professor, who are his uncle.'

Dr. Taylor lit a cigar, took a suck at his tumbler of whisky, and told the story —the whole story, in his own peculiar style, throwing his audience occasionally into roars of laughter.

'Well,' said the Professor, 'although circumstances over which I have no control have made me the young man's uncle, I think I must admit, that no decent man could have behaved otherwise than you did.'

Dr. Taylor spat modestly into the fire.

'And, bedad,' observed Dr. MacSwiney. 'That girl's worth forty of any ordinary girls about here, whatever her origin was.'

'That's so, sir,' replied Taylor.

'Only it takes sensible old fellows like us to recognise that fact,' continued MacSwiney. 'Never mind, Jack, I'll uphold her against the chatter of all the old women of both sexes in the parish, from the Bishop downwards.'

'Vivat Medicina!' exclaimed Jack, draining his glass. 'What's that row?'

'That is your mother and sister returning from a concert.'

'Is Max with them?'

'He is.'

'Hurray! Taylor, I shall be able to present you to my relations by-and-by, and to him too. It's seldom that so many good fellows have been under our roof.'

'Including, of course, yourself,' said the Professor.

'Why, certainly, sir,' replied Dr. Taylor. 'I may say that your son is a man I am d——d proud to call a friend.'

'Present generation not so bad as we made them out, are they, Professor?' said Dr. MacSwiney.

CHAPTER XIV.

'L'Envoi,' one might have headed this chapter, but as it is a word that has been in use for at least five centuries, and been run dry by the poets and novelists of the most recent of those centuries, it is not used. Readers will kindly consider that the substance is the same, even though the name they revere and expect be not bestowed on it.

* * * * *

A small group of persons is sitting round a green wooden table, under the shade of green trees, in that famous resort

on the banks of the Elbe known as the Brühl'sche Terrasse, in Dresden. It is the end of a long, hot day, spent by some of the party in wandering in the beautiful hills and valleys of the Sächsische Schweiz, by others in the almost equally fatiguing and enchanting alleys of the great galleries of painting in the Zwinger.

The group consists of five. There is a fair, but sun-tanned young man, in a worn walking suit, with an old straw hat on the back of his head, decorated with the faded ribbon of an Oxbridge boat club; a brier pipe in his mouth, a letter in his hand, a glass of beer on the table before him, and the materials of a sketching expedition scattered on the ground near his chair. This is Jack Miller.

Opposite him sits a dark, rather pale, but vivacious looking young lady with remarkable and large brown eyes. She is eating a parti-coloured ice, which seems

to possess a momentarily absorbing interest for her. This is Rosa. Rosa Miller.

The other parties are, a happy-looking fair Englishwoman with typical grey-blue eyes, who is trying to like Bairisch beer, at the instigation of her dark, bushy-headed and handsome Hungarian husband. For Max out of England is intensely Hungarian, very cheerful, and has forgotten philosophizing for a time, in the pleasure of inducting Hel into the beauties of German life. He means to take her away to Pesth soon.

The 'fifth party' to the quartette, as the Irishman said, is a person who is fortunate enough to be honoured with the intimacy, and temporarily with the society, of all the above persons, but is not entitled to any minute description. He has just announced his purpose of enrolling the achievements and sufferings of

Rosa in a forth-coming romance to bear the name.

This treat is regarded by all more in the light of a joke than anything else, assure them as he may of the deadly earnestness of his purpose. Jack suggests as a motto for it :

> 'Knabe sprach, Ich breche dich,
> Röslein auf der Heide !
> Röslein sprach, Ich stecke dich
> Dass du ewig denkst an mich,
> Röslein auf der Heide.'

Later he remarks, with his usual prefatory 'I say,' 'This letter is from Arthur O'Kelly. There is something in it I should like to read to you all. It is this :

'You remember Minnie ? Of course you do. So does Mrs. Jack Miller. Well, Minnie died yesterday, in her mother's cottage in the Ely fens somewhere. Her mother is a poor old woman,

with all the inherited traditions and prejudices of her class, and doubtless endued with a firm belief in everything that she reads in her old large-printed Bible, the only book she does read, or that she hears from the lips of the parson and squire, whatever they in their infinite wisdom may deign to say.

'Yet this old woman brought a lily to lay on Minnie's body—I saw that a few more flowers came there—and had her buried with as much barbaric pomp as she could afford. You know the importance such people attach to a showy funeral. No one attended it but her mother, her dog, and myself. I am keeping the dog. Her mother thanked me for coming, and said: "Her mother has forgiven her. So will her father. She hath loved much, therefore much shall be forgiven her."'

'When you write your romance,' said

Rosa, to the previously mentioned 'fifth party,' 'you must remember that the real heroine in it, the one that did most good, and suffered most ill, was Minnie.'

Then we were all silent for a while, and the sunset made a brilliant misty fringe above the long bridges that join the Altstadt and the Neustadt. Laurence smoked a cigarette, and gazed at the glittering river. Hel looked a little shocked at O'Kelly's letter.

The gardens became more crowded. Ladies, and citizens and children, and tall lieutenants and Hauptmänner, in long dark well-fitting frock uniforms and flat caps, swarmed in, with green and gold and blue and silver hussars. The atmosphere of the still summer evening became laden with scents and cigarette smoke.

Conversation went on in low voices everywhere.

A warm breeze stirred the green acacias at intervals.

One star shone out large and blueish in the west.

The cuirassiers' band began softly to play.

'Freut euch das Leben
Weil noch das Lämpchen glüht !
Pflückt euch die Rosen
Ehe sie verblüht.'

THE END.

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